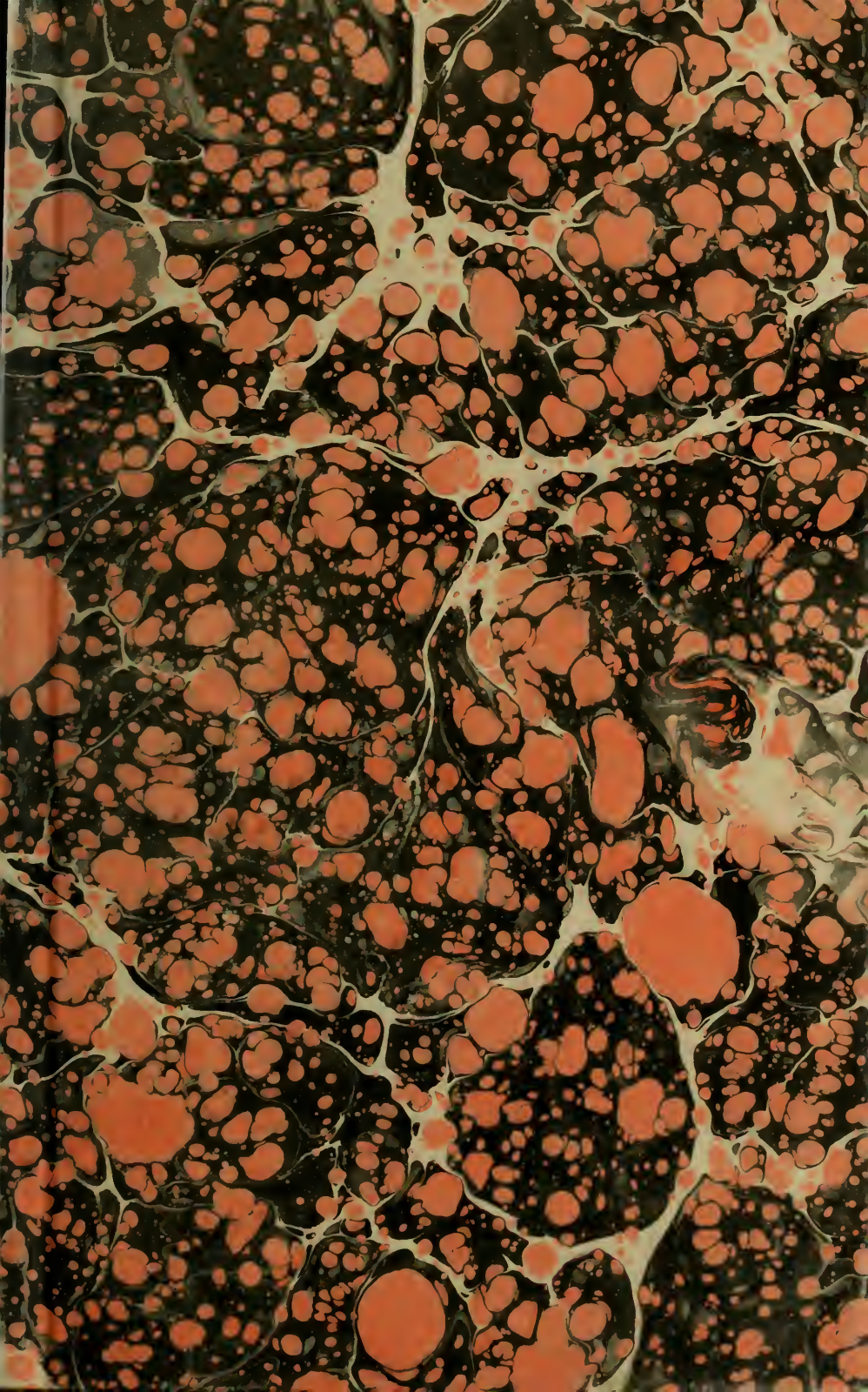

THE

HISTORY

OF

Prime Miniſters and Favourites,

IN ENGLAND;

FROM THE

CONQUEST down to the PRESENT TIME:

WITH

REFLECTIONS on the fatal Conſequences of their MISCONDUCT;

AND

POLITICAL DEDUCTIONS on the Perpetuity of FREEDOM in the ENGLISH Conſtitution:

Aſcertained and Vindicated

From the DESPOTISM affected by any of our SOVEREIGNS.

Quale ſit futurum novi Principis ingenium & regimen, apparet ex iis, quos primos publicis muneribus præficit. Si enim bonos & egregios viros eligit amicos & magiſtratus, bonum & felix regimen futurum eſt. Sin malos, & gratia, pecunia, vel ambitu potius quam virtute ſubnixos admovet, infelix futurum eſt. TAC. Lib. XIII. Annal.

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MDCCLXIII.

THE HISTORY OF PRIME MINISTERS, &c.

ALL nations, whatever their form of government may be, ſeem to agree in this notion, that it is better to have a good than a happy prince: whence, upon more mature conſideration, we may call it not merely a notion, but an inſtinct or law of nature, whereby mankind are actuated to wiſh ardently, that thoſe whom it hath pleaſed Providence to ſet over them as rulers, may, upon all occaſions, ſtudy and conſult their real intereſt and welfare. And, indeed, princes themſelves, if they would but ſometimes bend their thoughts to ſerious reflections, cannot help feeling the emotions of interior conviction, that it is more glorious to live in the memory of poſterity, as good than happy; the firſt being the ge-

nuine reſult of pure virtue; the ſecond, the deluſive ſport of capricious fortune. What is extent of territory to a nation that finds in itſelf the ſources of felicity without it? Inſolent ambition is always odious, and commonly meets with condign puniſhment. What is vain pomp, what are the empty ſhadows of magnificence, what is life ſunk in luxurious eaſe, what are rational faculties debaſed and emaſculated by frivolous ſelfiſh concerns? They are of no account in the eſtimation of the wiſe, they have a manifeſt tendency to make others miſerable, and the prince that ſtrives to raiſe a ſuperſtructure of happineſs upon them, muſt ſurely be conſcious to himſelf of the obloquy both of cotemporaries and poſterity.

A good prince will not build his fame upon ſo unſtable a foundation. His extenſive ſpirit of beneficence will prompt him to take the lead by virtuous example; for as Pliny juſtly obſerves in his panegyric, the life of the prince is a perpetual pattern, the people direct their curious views upon it, and ſtand in need not ſo much of command as inſtruction. And Paterculus ſays †, a prince who does that which is right, will teach his ſubjects to behave in the ſame manner: he is

† Lib. II.

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the firſt and greateſt in command, ſo alſo he ſhould be the firſt and greateſt in example. The celeſtial bodies cannot reſt nor ſtand ſtill, but receive their reſpective forces from perpetual motion; ſo a prince ſhould never droop into indolence; delicacy and ſoftneſs ſuit but very indifferently the active powers of adminiſtering juſtice, of providing for the ſafety and advantages of his ſubjects, and of ſo ordering the commonwealth committed to his care, that he may ſeem to have conſtantly in view the memorable † ſaying of Adrian the Roman emperor, adviſing 'the exerciſe of princely power as the concern of the people, and not as a private concern.' One muſt be ſurprized, were there not frequent examples of it in hiſtory, that any prince could ſeparate his intereſts from thoſe of his people, or preſume that they were incompatible. But ſuch ſiniſter views have no aſcendant over the good prince's mind; he ſees their incongruity for being productive of the proſperity of the ſtate he governs, and therefore it is his choice to love the commonwealth as his father's houſe, and his ſubjects as his children.

Whoever weighs well the motto prefixed to this tract will find it verified in all times

† Principatum exercendum eſſe tanquam rem populi, non vero ut privatam.

and countries. It imports, 'that the future genius and government of a new prince, will appear from thoſe whom he has appointed as chief over the public offices of the ſtate. If he chuſes good men and of conſummate abilities for friends and magiſtrates, his government will be good and happy: but if he promotes bad, or thoſe that are rather ſupported by favour, money, or bribery, than by virtue, it will be unhappy.' Here then is a prognoſtic, a prophetic maxim never yet found to have been proved falſe! And as it is ſuch, every prince that pays any regard to his own honour and the well-being of his people, muſt conſider it in the light of a ſalutary caution for prudently judging of, and examining into, the merits of thoſe he is about to prefer to poſts of importance. It will be ſoon known whether the party, is deſerving when once in poſſeſſion; for the magiſtracy ſhews the man.

A prince of capacity fills all poſts in his ſtate with men of eminent abilities, and his choice muſt be good, becauſe he can only prefer perſons of a ſimilar genius to his own. On the contrary, a weak prince entertains ſuch as reſemble him, and thus generally makes a bad choice. The people, who cannot perſonally know their maſter, judge of him

him from the talents of thoſe he employs. Queen Chriſtina of Sweden uſed to ſay, that under a ſtupid monarch, the whole court is, or will become ſuch. However, let the capacity of a prince be what it will, if he can but prevail upon himſelf to ſet aſide his ſelf-love, and can alſo preclude all motives of favour, he may liſten to the counſels of a few of approved wiſdom and integrity, men practiſed in the knowledge of men, who can lay before him a juſt eſtimate of perſons and characters. Then he cannot fail in a proper choice of men and meaſures. If the beſt and wiſeſt princes acted in this manner, diffident of themſelves, by how much the more ſhould others be circumſpect in their choice of counſellors, eſpecially when conſcious to themſelves of inſufficiency for forming adequate judgments, and diſcharging acts of government, which are to carry with them weight and dignity. The great emperor and philoſopher Marcus Antoninus being once ſpoke to by a flatterer for paying too great a deference to the advice of friends; 'It is by far more juſt, anſwered the emperor, that I ſhould be directed by the counſels of ſuch great friends, perſons of unqueſtionable merit, than I ſhould oblige them to be controlled by the dictates of my will.' The anſwer was

worthy of the emperor's noble candour, and a ſevere reprimand to the inſinuating courtier.

In another point of view, it may be a good leſſon to princes not to hearken to the voice of a factious cabal, or unwillingly to ſuffer themſelves to be caught in the ſnare of the artifice of others, who, aſpiring to the guidance of the ſtate-helm, plead the neceſſity of relaxation from the anxieties and fatigues of government, and ſo inſenſibly immerſe them in pleaſures, that at laſt they become regardleſs of what is tranſacted under the ſanction of their abuſed authority. Thus it was that Sejanus withdrew Tiberius from informing himſelf of the true ſtate of the affairs of the public.

But to bring nearer home the matter from thoſe general ideas which may have their uſe in political diſcuſſions, it may be obſerved with good reaſon, that no one man is more to be diſtinguiſhed from another by his features, than one nation is from another by its peculiar turn of genius in reſpect to government. The manners of every country are ſo adapted to their favourite form of government, that it is ſcarce poſſible to alter the one, without firſt debauching the other. All the revolutions that have happened in the ſeveral ſtates of Europe, are ſo many plain de-

monſtrations of this truth; and ſo evident a teſt ſeems indeed to have been eſtabliſhed by the wiſdom of Providence, that every nation, by perceiving the ſteps that naturally lead to their deſtruction, may guard againſt the danger. No nation therefore can be brought to ruin and deſolation but by its own remiſſneſs or conſent.

Now, if at any time a free people, by nature hardy, by cuſtom frugal and induſtrious, and by their ſituation incapable of ſubſiſting but by their own labour, manufactures, and trade, ſhould behold luxury, avarice, flo[illegible] corruption and treachery, breaking in upon them like a torrent; and ſhould diſcover a man in high ſtation to be the promoter of this deſtructive change of manners; they can no longer doubt of his being engaged in a deſign to enſlave them. And if ſuch a nation ſhould tamely ſuffer their corruptor with the agents of his iniquity to continue in the exerciſe of power, they may juſtly be accuſed of conſenting to their own ruin: for ſtateſmen are not eaſily frightened from their purpoſe, much leſs are they ſubject to repentance for their crimes. Pretended exigencies of the ſtate, with an hardened obſtinacy to break and cruſh refractory minds, drive them on; ſo that he who has once made an open attack upon the

conſtitution of his country, will never think himſelf ſafe from public juſtice, but by its total ſubverſion, which therefore he muſt accompliſh at the peril of his life.

There is no ſingularity in the genius of the Britiſh nation, which has been more remarked by foreigners, nor more cenſured by thoſe polite writers who were born under abſolute governments, than our ſtrong inclination to a change of miniſters. But had theſe gentlemen been better acquainted with us, they would have found that this love of change never grew to any height till the power, which it is the intention of our conſtitution to diſtribute amongſt ſeveral miniſters, is all centered in one man. And to our honour be it ſaid, there is nothing ſo peculiarly characteriſtic of a Briton, nothing that has more frequently preſerved our liberties, than that inſuperable hatred to an over-grown monſter of power, a PRIME MINISTER, which has always prevailed in this kingdom. It may well be called our Palladium, or the eternal baſis on which we may reſt in ſecurity: for, whilſt we cheriſh and retain it, our conſtitution muſt be out of danger; but when once we ſubmit to the ſupineneſs of diſregarding it, like the reſt of our neighbours, we muſt ſink into ſlavery. It then ſeems next to an

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impoſſibility, that Great Britain ſhould be ripened for chains, but by ſuch a creature of power; and hence, indeed, proportioned to the hazard our conſtitution is expoſed to from a Prime Miniſter, has been the national antipathy in all ages to this ſecond-rate tyrant.

Whilſt power is impartially lodged in many hands, we both obey and are fond of it. Here there is nothing to alarm us. Several great and able men, jointly engaged in one adminiſtration, but acting uninfluenced and independent of one another in their reſpective departments, is the only model of government ſuited to the legiſlature, ſuited to the very genius of the Britiſh nation. Miniſters, on ſuch a footing, are checks upon one another; each of them may have his diſtinct ſet of adherents, ſome of whom alliance, friendſhip, eſteem, and perhaps expectations, unite in his particular intereſt; but the main ſupport muſt be the character he bears in his country. When a number of ſuch great men thus conſpire friendly together to produce the ſalutary ends of good government, they draw after them a large body of the nation, and cannot therefore act but upon principles, that may preſerve to them their popularity amongſt their fellow-ſubjects. Such a miniſtry is built upon the ſtrong foundation of the people's

people's confidence and affection. Theſe are the motives that give them ſtrength to execute their maſter's buſineſs, and their maſter can offer ſuch men no degrees of power or wealth, that would be an equivalent, even in point of intereſt, to the loſs of their character.

Reverſe this noble proſpect, and behold the power of many miniſters ſhrunk up in the graſp of one ambitious man! Can ſuch a one ſubſiſt by any arts, but thoſe of corruption, or keeping his prince in ignorance of the true ſtate of affairs? As an enemy to his country, he can have no perſonal intereſt, no excelling qualities, no extraordinary accompliſhments, to attract perſons of integrity into his combination. Men of real worth and influence in their country are too much his equals, perhaps ſuperiors, not to ſcorn to act under him. Men of great abilities will ſcarce ſubmit to be reputed the mean tools of another's power. What the Prime Miniſter wants therefore in weight, he makes ſtrenuous endeavours to ſupply in numbers; and, as he cannot gain theſe by his natural ſtrength, he muſt introduce all the baſe ſtratagems of corruption, by a laviſh expending of the public treaſure, together with a multiplicity of places, penſions, reverſions, jobs, and contracts.

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It is a truth, too much to be lamented by all well-wiſhers to their country, that too many of our nobility and gentry, by their luxuriant and extravagant manner of living, pave the way for their coming into a neceſſitous dependance. Theſe are the very perſons the Prime Miniſter hunts after. He allures them, ſometimes by feigned pity, ſometimes by applauding and indulging them in their follies. As their morals are already corrupt, it is exceeding eaſy for him to corrupt their votes. Now his ſway becomes more and more extenſive, and he may for ſome time maintain his power againſt the bent of a whole people. But even this device muſt at laſt fail him; for as corruption is the Prime Miniſter's ſole inſtrument of ſtate, and the Arcanum of his empire, it cannot be expected that when all ways and means are irretrievably exhauſted, the continually craving appetite can be ſatiated. Then it is that he becomes deſperate in his projects; his creatures are no longer true to him than whilſt they are feeding; and his other fellow ſubjects, oppreſſed and plundered to gorge theſe, are all unanimous for decreeing his overthrow. Thus circumvented, what muſt be his reſources? He has no other method left to ſkreen himſelf from juſt reſentment, than by throwing into his

maſter's

maſter's hand ſuch an abſolute power, as may be ſufficient to protect him againſt the whole kingdom, if his maſter is weak enough to ſtand upon the narrow bottom of his miniſter.

This has been, and this muſt be, the deſperate game of every Prime Miniſter in this country. Juſtly therefore is ſuch a one the object of the people's hatred. Should we carefully paſs in review the different periods of the Britiſh Hiſtory, we ſhall find our wiſeſt monarchs had no ſuch miniſter; and of thoſe princes who had, we learn that ſome were betrayed by their Minion, as ſoon as he ſaw the ſovereign power was too weak to protect him; others, we read, loſt both their crown and life by too obſtinate an adherence to a hated Favourite; and ſome, though very few, ſaved themſelves, by honourably giving up a wicked miniſter to the juſtice of an injured nation. To ſet theſe intereſting particulars in a clear light, it will not be amiſs to take a curſory view of all the reigns from the Conqueſt down to the preſent time, and to throw together ſome deductions on the incidents as they occur.

William the Firſt, ſurnamed the Conqueror, began his reign in 1066. Being by nature formed to keep, as well as to gain a crown, he never would truſt his power into one hand.

When therefore the moſt potent of his miniſters, Odo, biſhop of Bayeux and earl of Kent, had, by his rapacious management of the public money, amaſſed a mighty treaſure, and was forming a ſcheme to eſtabliſh himſelf independent of his maſter, the wiſe king took him from amidſt a confluence of nobles and gentry, who attended on him, and at once diſappointed all his ambitious views, by a ſtrict impriſonment, and he was afterwards obliged to abjure the realm.

We have here firſt in this miniſter an example of the two favourite vices of miniſters, avarice and ambition. They may in a great meaſure be called the rocks they uſually ſplit upon. Perhaps they are not always united in the ſame perſon, but we certainly find that one or the other is always the moving principle of their conduct. There is no paſſion which ſo often miſſes its aim, or on which the preſent has ſo much influence to the prejudice of the future, as avarice; and it may be remarked, that it reigns moſt in thoſe miniſters who have but few good qualities to recommend them; or if they have any good qualities, it generally gets the better of them, till at laſt we ſee an unnatural gradation of miſtruſt, unſociableneſs, peeviſhneſs, ſeverity, and cruelty. A miniſter of ſtate ſhould be

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diſintereſted, if for no other reaſon than that private intereſt in ſtateſmen is always prejudicial to the public. In like manner, we are induced to condemn the ambition of miniſters, as a monſtrous excreſcence of the mind, which makes ſuperfluity, honours, riches, diſtinction and power, mere neceſſaries of life. But as in the main ambition is the vigour and activity of the ſoul, in whatever department a miniſter acts, he ſhould think it a duty incumbent on him, as the ſervant of the prince his maſter, and of the public, to ſeek no other end than their tranquillity and greatneſs. Glory is the only thing he is allowed to repute his own; but how can he hope even for this, if his attempts at independency diſcredit his maſter's reputation? That miniſter only can be of a true generous ſpirit, who requires no other reward of his actions, but the honour and ſatisfaction of having done them. A certain ſplendor ariſes from virtue that makes him reſpectable to all; and it is herein he places true glory, which, as Tully ſays, conſiſts in theſe particulars, that the people love us, and that being affected with a certain admiration towards us, they may think we deſerve honour.

A truly great man is not contented with the ſubmiſſion only of thoſe under him, but rather

covets

covets to be loved than feared. The reverſe is the character hiſtorians give us of William I. and therefore not intitled to ſtand in the liſt of good and unexceptionable princes. 'Tis true, he uſed the Engliſh with ſome humanity at his acceſſion; but finding them diſguſted at his rewarding his Norman followers with Engliſh eſtates, and beſides engaged in ſome plots to dethrone him in favour of Edgar Atheling, the rightful heir to the crown, he treated them barbarouſly, cutting off the hands and feet of many thouſands, and deſtroying all the North of England with fire and ſword. Before he died there was ſcarce an Engliſh gentleman poſſeſſed of an eſtate in his own right.

William II. who ſucceeded him in 1087, is repreſented as a prince of a fierce and avaricious temper. He was wholly under the influence of Ranulph, biſhop of Durham, who, by new methods of ſqueezing and oppreſſing the people, ſo fed his maſter's inſatiable thirſt after money, as to become the principal director of his counſels. His mal-adminiſtration diſpoſed the ſubjects to revolt. One conſpiracy broke out in the year 1095; and another more formidable was ripe for execution, when the king's death prevented it. He was killed in the New Foreſt by his bow-

bearer,

bearer, Sir Walter Tyrrel, a Norman knight; whether by miſchance or deſign is not agreed; but this prince might have enjoyed an abſolute government of all his ſubjects, had he ſought it by endearing acts; but contending to eſtabliſh it by force, he made both himſelf and his people miſerable.

Henry I. ſucceeded in 1100. He is juſtly reckoned amongſt the beſt and wiſeſt of our princes, and had no Prime Miniſter. He ſought out the moſt able men in his kingdom for the offices of ſtate, preferring ſuch only as were acceptable to the people. In all other reſpects he took the beſt courſes to pleaſe and gratify his ſubjects; by ſeeing himſelf that no corruption or oppreſſion ſhould burden the country; by making frequent progreſſes to obſerve how his realm was ordered in every part of it; by being affable and eaſy of acceſs, ſo that all might enjoy his company; and by being hoſpitable, ſo that all might partake of his good cheer. Nothing ſo much endeared him to the nation, as committing to a cloſe and loathſome priſon Ranulph of Durham, the Prime Miniſter and oppreſſor of the former reign; and, when afterwards one of his own miniſtry, Robert Earl of Mallent, had by his conduct incurred the people's hatred, he firſt diſgraced and then ſtript him of his

vaſt

vaſt eſtate. Both life and fortune ſeem to have been in the power of the crown from the time of the conqueſt, 'till this prince's reign; but like a true father of his country, he conſented to reſtore the laws of Edward the Confeſſor, whereby his barons were entitled to hold their eſtates on the ſame advantageous terms the Saxons, their predeceſſors, had enjoyed them. This revival of the Saxon laws, and reducing the principal of them into writing, was the foundation of that ſtatute, which afterwards obtained the name of MAGNA CHARTA.

If we conſider attentively the character of this king, we ſhall find that he fulfilled in the actions of his life all the requiſites of a patriot prince. He treated his ſubjects with an extreme tenderneſs, perſuaded, that to intimidate them with fear, after the example of his father and brother, was only to make himſelf maſter of the body, whereas love would make him reign over the heart. Princes that govern with rigour, cannot ſay to themſelves that they live in ſecurity. Thoſe that give fear, muſt be afraid themſelves in their turn, not being able to rid themſelves of the apprehenſion of the revolt of people who obey them only by conſtraint: whence, if violent things are not durable, an empire having no

other foundation but violence, cannot long ſubſiſt. Yet, though our Henry was ſenſible that mildneſs was preferable to rigour, and that a ſtate is more ſolidly built upon love than fear, there were notwithſtanding occaſions when he found it expedient to make his clemency yield to ſeverity, and to ſet aſide for a moment the quality of father, to exerciſe that of judge. The zeal of juſtice animated his heart, yet ſo as to be always an innocent affection, curbing vice and rewarding virtue. No king is worthy of a ſceptre that is not like him, good and juſt.

Stephen, earl of Boloign, ſon of Adela the Conqueror's fourth daughter, ſtept into the throne in 1135, while the empreſs Maud, Henry the Firſt's daughter, was abſent in France. He was elected to the crown upon this conſideration; that by preferring one, whoſe title was weak, the nation might be better ſecured in their ancient liberties, than they could be under one, that came to the throne by lineal deſcent. Accordingly, the fealty ſworn to him was upon condition that he obſerved the tenour of a charter, wherein the rights and liberties of the ſubject were declared. But his Prime Miniſter, Alberic de Ver having led him into arbitrary meaſures, the nation revolted from him to the empreſs Maud,

Maud, who was the rightful heir of the crown by deſcent. She too had a Prime Miniſter, the biſhop of Wincheſter, who, tho' brother to Stephen, had ſet the crown on her head; but in whom ſhe repoſed too great a confidence. For this ambitious ſtateſman, perceiving the Londoners averſe from Maud, and that the whole nation began to diſlike her, conſulted his own intereſt by a private treaty with her competitor, and having obtained his own terms, obliged his royal miſtreſs to quit the kingdom, and retire to her own dominions beyond ſea. However, it was ſtipulated that Henry, the ſon of the empreſs Maud, by Jeffery Plantagenet, earl of Anjou, ſhould ſucceed him; and the next year king Stephen dying, Henry II. in 1154, aſcended the throne without oppoſition.

This Henry II. in all his reign had but one Prime Miniſter, to whom all the troubles, or the ſeeds at leaſt of all the troubles of his life were owing. This was the famous Thomas Becket, archbiſhop of Canterbury, who was for ſome years the ſole manager of all affairs of ſtate, and was entruſted with the care of the education of the king's eldeſt ſon. But this wicked miniſter was no ſooner raiſed to an independent ſtate, than he entered into an open oppoſition to his maſter; diſtreſſed

him in all his counſels; and concerted ſuch meaſures with the young prince, who had been under his tuition, as produced an open rupture between the father and the ſon. He inſiſted with the clergy on being exempted from the juriſdiction of the temporal courts in criminal caſes, and at length became ſo exceeding inſolent, that the king let fall ſome expreſſions, as if he wanted to get rid of him; whereupon four of the king's knights haſtened to Canterbury, and killed the archbiſhop as he aſſiſted at the afternoon ſervice before the altar. The queen, and the king's ſons, ſoon after raiſed a rebellion againſt him, on account of his familiarity with fair Roſamond; and his ſons being joined by the king of France, defeated their father, which broke the king's heart. Many indeed have imputed all the diſaſters of this unhappy reign, to the judgments of heaven upon the king, for having ſinned againſt the laws of nature and of conſcience in the beginning of his reign, by an open violation and diſobedience of his father's will. This king reſumed the grants of the crown-lands which king Stephen had made, and confirmed the great charter granted by his grandfather Henry.

Richard I. the eldeſt ſurviving ſon of Henry II. ſucceeded him in 1189. As he ſpent the greateſt

greateſt part of his time beyond ſea, ſo he unhappily veſted his whole power in the narrow hands of one Prime Miniſter, the biſhop of Ely, who ſoon exerted his authority independant of his maſter: for he not only impriſoned and oppreſſed the king's beſt ſubjects, but even turned out his perſonal favourites. He excluded the nobility and thoſe miniſters whom the king had joined in commiſſion with him, from any ſhare of government, and acted in ſo arbitrary and inſolent a manner, as rendered him odious to the whole kingdom. The nation, no longer able to bear with his oppreſſion, invited from beyond ſea earl John, who had thereby an opportunity of aſſuming the government, whilſt his unhappy brother the king, being taken priſoner by the emperor, in his return from the Holy Land, had well nigh loſt his life and kingdom, by thus imprudently putting the reins of government into the hands of one ill-choſen miniſter, who could not hold them. The nation paid an immenſe ſum for this king's ranſom; but he did not long ſurvive it, being mortally wounded before the caſtle of Chalons in France.

King John, his brother, and youngeſt ſon of Henry II. ſucceeded him in 1199. He was a poor weak prince, ſuffering himſelf to

be governed by the man, who had the beſt addreſs to flatter him, and moſt of all by ſuch, who offered him new methods of raiſing money on the people. By this ſecret Hubert, archbiſhop of Canterbury, became the ſole director of his councils, which he conducted in ſo arbitrary a manner, as to raiſe a civil war, in the very beginning of which, this pecuniary projector died. His ſucceſſor in favour and power was John Gray, a Norfolk man, who for his private intereſt, engaged his maſter, firſt in idle conteſts abroad with the pope and the king of France; and then perſuaded him to mean ſubmiſſions to thoſe very enemies he had raiſed againſt him. This diſguſted all the ſubjects at home; for the nation could not bear that ſtrangers ſhould offer indignities to the king and kingdom, with impunity. The Norfolk man, being thus become the object of the people's hatred, next procured for his maſter a conſiderable body of foreign troops, which he kept in pay, in order to conquer his own ſubjects; and this bad ſtep drew on an invaſion; ſo that our wretched country was waſted by two contending armies, 'till the unhappy monarch himſelf, being in the end deſerted on all ſides, was poiſoned at Swineſhead-abbey, and died unpitied, as he had lived unbeloved.

Henry

Henry III. eldeſt ſon of king John, ſucceeded him in 1216. Unable to learn wiſdom from his father's miſconduct and miſfortunes, he was all his life a wretched prey to favourites. Hugh, or Hubert de Burgh was the firſt, and a moſt inſolent one. He forced the people to pay as he pleaſed, and not according to their abilities. His ill conduct bred an inſurrection againſt the king, who at length forſook him; being convinced of this miniſter's folly, in expending the treaſure of the nation in fruitleſs and ſhameful expeditions; and of his fraud, in applying no ſmall ſhare of it to his own private uſe. He was both diſgraced and impriſoned for his mal-adminiſtration: but the poor monarch was no ſooner delivered from this deſtructive engroſſer of power, than he fell into the hands of another; Peter, biſhop of Wincheſter. This miniſter and his creatures ſo harraſſed the kingdom with taxes, that the king was forced to ſummon a parliament, in order to prevent a civil war. But the barons ſent the king word they would not come to parliament, 'till he had removed the biſhop of Wincheſter from his court; which if he refuſed to do, they would expel him and his evil counſellor the realm, and chuſe a new king. This unhappy reign was afterwards one continued

ſcene of oppreſſion and civil war, occaſioned by the wicked miniſters, who ſucceſſively engroſſed the ſovereign's ear, and made him quarrel with his worthieſt ſubjects, till at laſt a Prime Miniſter, Simon de Montfort, earl of Leiceſter, whom he had raiſed from nothing, employed all the power his maſter had weakly put into his hands, in oppoſition to him. He firſt raiſed an army, and then attacked the king at Lewis, where he defeated and took him priſoner, and kept him under cloſe confinement for near two years, himſelf all the while governing the nation in his name; till the brave prince Edward ſlew this traiterous Prime Miniſter at Eveſham, and thereby ſet both the king and kingdom at liberty. This king reſumed the crown lands, and cancelled the Great Charter.

Edward I. who in 1272, ſucceeded his father Henry III. may well be ranked amongſt the greateſt princes, that ever reigned in this or any other country. Copying after Henry I. a model which he endeavoured to exceed, he never beſtowed his confidence on one man only, but ſought after the ableſt of his nobles for public poſts, in which he gave to each an equal ſhare of power. He ſeverely puniſhed every one in employment, who was found guilty of oppreſſion or injuſtice; and no leſs

than

than thirteen of his judges were at one time condemned by him for extortion, and fined 100,000 marks, which was then as much as 800,000 would be at this time. Three knights were choſen in every county to determine what infractions were made in the great charter, and to this wiſe prince we owe the beſt laws in being to this day, for ſecuring the liberties and properties of the ſubject; for he conſulted in all things his people's intereſt, and their inclination rather than his own. And, in nothing was his ſagacity more remarkable, than in foretelling the unhappy fate of his only ſurviving ſon.

Edward II. who began his reign in 1307. Never prince came to the crown with greater love and more general applauſe of all his ſubjects than he did. This was chiefly on account of his father, of whoſe virtues, by his firſt ſhew of popularity, it was expected he would be equally the inheriter. And indeed, the love of his ſubjects might have been ſecured to him by a little wiſe management; but when it appeared that he hated all his father's real friends, and that he violated his father's laſt will, by recalling Gaveſton from baniſhment; the averſion to him grew as univerſal as the applauſe had been. His Prime Miniſter Gaveſton became ſo odious to the nation,

nation, that the nobles roſe in arms againſt him, and having ſeized, they executed him without a trial. This minion was no ſooner deſtroyed, than two others roſe in his ſtead; the Spencers, father and ſon. Theſe men ſo vexed the people with their arbitrary impoſitions, that it drew on a war between the king and the barons, who compelled him to baniſh the Spencers; but he ſoon recalling them, the queen, and Mortimer her gallant, paſſed over into France, taking prince Edward with them, the king's eldeſt ſon. They afterwards invaded the kingdom, the Spencers were put to death as traitors, and the poor monarch himſelf loſt his crown and life ſoon after.

Here it will not be improper to obſerve, in regard to Favouritiſm, that there are few Favourites who know how to order their actions, and to maintain themſelves in the moderation that is neceſſary for preſerving the good graces both of their maſter and the public. One muſt be born with a very eminent genius, to be capable of digeſting an extraordinary favour, and it is certain, that as the exceſs of aliments ſuppreſſes the action of the ſtomach, and ſuffocates natural heat, in like manner an exceſs of favour robs moſt men of their judgment, and infatuates them to the degree

of

of making them loſe the uſe of prudence. It is therefore few or none of them have been found to enjoy the gifts of fortune till they had made a peaceful exit from off the ſtage of life: on the contrary, the far greater part have been ſeen in all times, after being led by fortune in triumph to the higheſt pinnacle of grandeur, to have precipitated themſelves into the deepeſt abyſs of miſery, or to have ſtruck againſt the favour itſelf they poſſeſſed, as if it had been converted into a rock for their deſtruction. He that is wiſer, will conſider that a middling favour, a favour that does not flaſh into noiſe and ſurpriſe, carries more ſecurity with it than the greateſt. He will reſt contented with what his maſter with the voice of the people, is pleaſed to confer upon him; ſo that if fortune ſhews ſome earneſtneſs in raiſing him, his prudence will teach him how inconſtant her favours are, and that nothing is more capable of making them permanent than uſing them with moderation; more eſpecially he ſhould be extremely careful of never abuſing the confidence repoſed in him, by uſurping too great an authority, or aiming at independance. But in whatever ſhape this topic may be conſidered, it is very certain that the title of Favourite has been always odious in England: not that it is pre-

tended

tended to exclude majeſty from the pleaſing fancy of a boſom friend; but it will be always more prudent for blunting the ſtings of envy, and making void the ſuſpicion of ill counſels, that a king ſhould never affect having a Favourite, nor a Favourite affect being favoured by a king.

Edward III. in his minority was under the uſurped tutelage of the queen his mother. During her weak adminiſtration, which began in 1327, Mortimer was ſole miniſter. His baſe murder of the depoſed king, his ſcandalous treaty with the Scots, his rapacious ſale of public offices, and his open robbery of the nation's treaſure, had ſo diſhonoured and incenſed the whole kingdom, that whilſt he was wholly taken up with inventing new methods for aggrandizing himſelf and all his kindred, the nobles conſpired to ſeize upon his perſon; which being done in the queen's apartment, the king being preſent at detecting him there, they forced the queen to call a parliament; in which ſhe herſelf was diveſted of all her ill-conducted authority, and her minion Mortimer was hanged and drawn at Tyburn. During the reſt of this long and glorious reign, there was no Prime Miniſter, but many of thoſe ſtateſmen, whom the king employed, were at different times called by him

him to a ſtrict account for baſe practices, in raiſing oppreſſive taxes, and for corrupt dealing in the treaſury. The chancellor, treaſurer, chief-juſtice, and five more, were for theſe crimes impriſoned in the year 1340; and the archbiſhop of Canterbury was diſgraced for the ſame ill conduct in 1341. The ſevere puniſhments inflicted by this wiſe monarch on corrupt judges; the wholeſome laws made by him to repreſs luxury and vice of every kind; his watchful care over our trade and manufactures, and the wiſe acts of parliament paſſed by him, for the encouragement and improvement of our ſtaple commodities; the many glorious ſucceſſes his arms were bleſſed with abroad, and the happy quiet his ſubjects enjoyed at home, are all of them ſo many demonſtrations, that this great king was not in the hands of a Prime Miniſter. But behold the inſtability of human nature! Edward III. after ſo long and glorious a reign, was governed in his old age by Alice Pierſe, his concubine.

Richard II. ſon of Edward the Black Prince, and grandſon of Edward III. ſucceeded him in 1377; but by not treading in his ſteps, loſt both his crown and life. He came to the throne with great advantages; the people were enamoured of him, receiving him for

their

their king with univerſal joy and ſatisfaction; and the loſs of their brave king, ſo lately deceaſed, was quite forgotten, being ſwallowed up by the hopes of that happineſs, which they promiſed themſelves under this his ſucceſſor. Yet the ſcene was ſo intirely changed in a few years time, and the taxes grew ſo inſupportable, more from the method of collecting them, than from their quantity, that one rebellion was no ſooner quelled, than another broke out. The king himſelf ſeemed only to have aſſumed the government, that he might throw his own power into the hands of a corrupt Prime Miniſter, Michael de la Pole, earl of Suffolk. He had grown up ſo ſuddenly from a poor to a rich eſtate, by bribery in his office and by embezzling the public money, by grants from the crown to him and his family, and by oppreſſing the ſubjects with illegal taxes, for which he afterwards compounded with them in private; that in the end, the parliament petitioned the king to remove him from his councils; and the king being in no condition to diſpute the point, at length conſented to this demand; and then it appeared how good a prince king Richard was, when ſeparated from evil counſel.

The

The guilty miniſter was with the royal approbation depoſed from all his offices; his eſtate of 1000 l. a year, equal to 10000 l. now, was confiſcated, and he was fined in 20,000 marks. But the poor monarch could not long hold the reins of government himſelf; he ſoon choſe another Prime Miniſter, full as wicked as the former, Robert duke of Ireland. This miniſter's firſt ſtep was to ſcreen Michael de la Pole, having perſuaded the king to remit his fine and reſtore him to his eſtate, and to diſcountenance thoſe nobles who had procured his diſgrace; inſinuating to his deluded ſovereign, that the main aim of thoſe nobles, who procured the ſentence on Pole, was to dethrone him by diſgracing his firſt miniſter; whence this eaſy inference was drawn, 'That the king is not fit to rule, who knows not whom to truſt?' By theſe and ſuch like artifices and arguments, the king was wrought up to the ruin of thoſe lords, whom theſe bad miniſters accounted their enemies. Several projects were formed to deſtroy them by force; but the univerſal love the nation bore them made this impracticable. The miniſter tried to pack a parliament; but that too was found impoſſible, the nation being in a flame againſt the court. Theſe attempts proving unſucceſsful, produced a

civil war, in which the miniſterial forces being routed, the duke of Ireland and the earl of Suffolk were both forced to fly from public juſtice. But the chief tool of their power, Sir Robert Treſilian, being ſeized, was condemned in parliament, and purſuant to their ſentence, drawn through the city of London on a hurdle, and hanged at Tyburn. After this public act of juſtice, the nation was at quiet for ſome few years, till the earl of Rutland, afterwards created duke of Aumerle, became Prime Miniſter. Fearing the fate of his predeceſſors, he reſolved to remove thoſe ſturdy patriots out of the way, who had accompliſhed the ruin of the duke of Ireland and earl of Suffolk. He therefore packed a houſe of commons by wicked means, and got the earl of Arundel and others to be impeached, condemned and executed. This, and many other acts of oppreſſion, ſo diſguſted the city of London, from whence the diſguſt ſpread through the whole kingdom, that every thing was ripe for a civil war. In this condition were affairs, when the Prime Miniſter, as if deſignedly to complete his maſter's ruin, perſuaded him to go over to his dominion of Ireland; where he had no ſooner landed, than the duke of Lancaſter, with a ſmall body of foreign troops, invaded this kingdom; and having

having ſeized upon ſome of the chief inſtruments of the miniſter's tyranny, and put them to death, was by the whole nation received as their deliverer. The king, upon this news, returned from Ireland, with an army ſufficient to have maintained his crown, had they adhered to him: but remark the fidelity, that may be expected from all Prime Miniſters! The duke of Aumerle, to whom the preſent diſtreſs of the king's affairs was chiefly owing, was the firſt that deſerted him; diſmiſſed his beſt troops, and fled over to the duke of Lancaſter, with 500 men. Richard II. was ſoon after himſelf betrayed into the hands of his enemy; depoſed from the throne by his parliament, and at laſt murdered in his priſon.

Henry IV. duke of Lancaſter, and ſon of the duke of Lancaſter, the king's uncle, who claimed the crown of Caſtile in right of his wife, and invaded Spain, ſucceeded him in 1399. As he came to the crown by the people's choice, ſo he maintained himſelf in the poſſeſſion of it, by conſulting their intereſt. He never placed his power out of his own hands. His reign was indeed diſturbed by civil wars, which his diſputed title, and the burden of neceſſary taxes drew upon him; for, as it is commonly obſerved, people do not love to buy even happineſs too dear. But

his wife conduct, the able ministers he employed, and the equality he maintained in the distribution of his favours, with his constant care of the commercial interests and honour of this nation, made him at last a victor over all his enemies, both at home and abroad, and laid the foundation of the greatness and glory of his son,

Henry V. who succeeded him in 1413. During his short but glorious reign, he had no Prime Minister. His counsellors were chosen by him amongst the gravest and wisest of his nobility. He went in progress through many parts of his kingdom, and received all complaints of mal-administration with chearfulness, even from the meanest of his people. All abuses of his authority he immediately reformed, not sparing the greatest of his ministers, when he found them guilty of misdemeanors; telling them, that since they had no respect to his honour, which was wounded by their injustice, he could have no motive to favour them, but punish them the more severely; because, for the sake of a little gain or friendship, they had robbed him of what he most valued, his people's love and affection.

Henry VI. was the reverse of his wife and great father, in the whole conduct of his long, weak

weak and turbulent reign, which began in 1422. He had no ſooner taken into his hands the power of the government, than he beſtowed the whole adminiſtration of it on one wicked miniſter or another, 'till by their means he was deprived of his dignity, liberty and life. William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, his firſt Prime Miniſter, was ſupported in his power by the aſcendant the queen had gained over her huſband, even after he had conceived a juſt averſion for him. The oppreſſion of the ſubject at home, the loſſes we ſuſtained abroad, and the contempt brought upon our councils, by Suffolk's ignorance and blunders, raiſed the nation's diſcontent to the higheſt pitch. It was no injury, they ſaid, to think of another king, ſince the preſent ſovereign had depoſed himſelf in effect, by ſuffering the queen and Suffolk to over-rule all. The commons at length impeached him for treaſon, and the lords committed him to the Tower; but during a receſs of parliament, the queen procured his enlargement, and reſtored him to his former favour. This was ſo highly reſented by the nation, that the court was obliged to baniſh him, in order to ſave his life; but that proved ineffectual; for the ſhip, in which he embarked for France, was purſued and taken by another ſhip, belonging to

the duke of Exeter, and Suffolk himſelf was beheaded by the captain near Dover ſands. The next Prime Miniſter in this reign was the duke of Somerſet, who roſe in high favour with the king and queen, ruling and governing all as he pleaſed. The nation was not in the leaſt diſpoſed to a rebellion againſt the king, for no harm was meant him, who did no ill to any, and deſired the nation's welfare in all things; but againſt the queen, the duke of Somerſet, and his cabal, who uſurped the regal authority. The firſt attempt the nobles made was on the duke of Somerſet, whom they cauſed to be arreſted in the queen's bed-chamber, and ſent to the Tower, in order to anſwer the crimes that ſhould be laid to his charge in the enſuing parliament. Accordingly, he was there accuſed of high treaſon; but by the queen's influence that parliament was diſſolved and the duke was ſet at liberty. Hereupon the nobles roſe in arms, and declared for the houſe of York: the court too raiſed an army, which was totally defeated; the king himſelf was taken priſoner, and the Prime Miniſter ſlain in the action. The reſt of this reign was one continued ſcene of civil war, till it ended in the king's murder, and in the transfer of the crown to another family. The character given of this prince in hiſtory

hiſtory is, ‘ That he might have been as good a king as England ever had, if he had been guided by a wiſe and good council; but he was ruled by Favourites and by his queen, whoſe ambitious aſſuming the regal power beyond her ſphere, made it thought no rebellion to take it out of her hands, and put it where it would be better ordered, and was more due. The king's fall was much pitied, becauſe, as to his perſon, undeſerved; but the common good ſo much required a change, that it was judged better one ſhould ſuffer an injury, rather than the whole nation periſh.’

Edward IV. eldeſt ſon of Richard duke of York, aſcended the throne in 1461, but was not fully ſettled in it, 'till his predeceſſor's murder in 1471. Though perhaps too much addicted to pleaſure, he was in the main a wiſe and able monarch. He never had a Prime Miniſter; but relied upon the advices of a well choſen council, and on his own abilities. This conduct acquired him a crown, and this recovered it for him, when it was ſnatched away by the treachery of ſome, in whom he moſt confided: for he was defeated by the earl of Warwick and made priſoner, and king Henry remounted the throne; but eſcaping beyond ſea, he invaded England, and again obtained poſſeſſion of the

kingdom. As his own good capacity always led him into the meaſures that were moſt conducive to the honour and intereſt of the kingdom, ſo alſo it made him in general more an object of the people's affections, than was to be expected in a time of ſuch confuſion and bloodſhed. The only weakneſs of his reign, and as Sir Thomas More obſerves, by which occaſion was given after his death, to the uſurpation of his brother Richard, was his over fondneſs for the queen; at whoſe importunity he promoted her friends, beyond what either their birth or abilities could entitle them to; by which the ancient nobility and the great commoners were diſobliged.

Edward V. eldeſt ſon of Edward IV. by the bad politics of his father, loſt both his crown and life. He had reigned but two months and thirteen days, when he was impriſoned by his uncle, the duke of Glouceſter, who uſurped his throne, and murdered both him and his brother Richard, duke of York.

Richard III. the youngeſt ſon of Richard the firſt duke of York, began his ſhort reign in 1483. There was no inſtance of a Prime Miniſter under him, unleſs Stafford, duke of Buckingham, may deſerve that title. He it was, who firſt ſet the crown on this Uſurper's head;

head; but either he was not gratified, according to his expectation, or elſe he was apprehenſive that his maſter could not long maintain his ill-acquired dignity; for he ſoon after engaged in a conſpiracy againſt him, which proved fatal to them both; for the duke was taken and beheaded as a traytor, without any legal proceſs, by the king's bare order. But the ſtorm he had raiſed, was not to be quelled, but by the death of the uſurper, who was killed at the battle of Boſworth, by Henry, earl of Richmond, who thereupon was proclaimed king in the field of battle.

Henry VII. began his reign in 1485. He was deſcended from John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaſter, the fourth ſon of Edward III. He married Elizabeth, eldeſt daughter of Edward IV. and thereby united the houſes of York and Lancaſter. He was indeed too prudent a prince, to truſt his whole power in the hands of any one miniſter; and yet he often gave more authority to a few, than was conſiſtent either with his great ſagacity, or his intereſt. An unhappy love of money frequently betrayed him into this miſtake in government, and made him rather employ the baſe inſtruments of gratifying that paſſion, than thoſe, who were better qualified for the real ſervice of the ſtate. To this unpopular

foible, in a Britiſh ſovereign, were owing many of thoſe inſurrections, which, under a weaker politician, muſt have ended in deſtruction. The oppreſſive ſubſidy in 1489, though granted in parliament, cauſed a rebellion in the North, in which the chief promoter of the tax, the earl of Northumberland, fell a ſacrifice to popular reſentment. Another parliamentary aid in 1496, was ſo grievous to the Corniſh men, that they roſe in arms, to oppoſe the levying it; and after ſome ſucceſs in the Weſt, marched in a body on to London, and came as far as Blackheath, where they encountered the royal forces in a pitched battle. Towards the latter end of this reign, the king's love of money increaſing with his age, Empſon and Dudley, thoſe leeches of the people, as lord Bacon calls them, built their greatneſs upon their ſingular talents of deviſing new methods how to raiſe money; in which they ſo cruelly ſqueezed and oppreſſed the ſubjects, whilſt the king's coffers abounded with treaſure which he could not uſe, that in the end the whole kingdom was diſpoſed to rebel. It was therefore one of the felicities of this reign, that an opportune death withdrew the king from any future blow of fortune; which certainly, in regard of the great hatred of his people,

had not been impoſſible to have come upon him.

Henry VIII. his ſecond and only ſurviving ſon, ſucceeded to the crown in 1509. He found no other methods of recalling the loſt affections of his ſubjects, but by giving up to public juſtice thoſe two wicked miniſters Empſon and Dudley; who, being guilty of that very worſt of treaſons, 'alienating the people's hearts from their ſovereign,' were beheaded on the 18th of Auguſt 1510. This wiſe act procured the new king the whole nation's love; which he preſerved for many years, 'till the oppreſſive conduct of his own Prime Miniſter, Wolſey, ſtaggered their loyalty. The character of this ambitious ſtateſman has been ſo often ſet forth in all its colours, that it need only be obſerved, that he engaged his maſter in many fruitleſs and inglorious expeditions abroad, which ſunk the honour as much as they drained the treaſure of the nation; that he was ſo inſolent as to uſurp the regal ſtyle, ſeldom ſpeaking of his maſter's actions, but under the title; 'We did ſo, or I and the king;' that he ſold his ſovereign's alliance, by turns, to every potentate in Europe, 'till at length there was ſcarce a prince left, who thought it worth the purchaſing; and laſt of all, that he accumulated

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ſo vaſt an eſtate, as to form a project of making himſelf independent of the crown. His character may be ſummed up with what a noble writer of thoſe times, the lord Herbert, ſays: 'One error was, that he and his were inveſted with a hateful multiplicity of offices and places; which as it drew much envy on the cardinal in particular, ſo it derogated not a little from the regal authority, while one man alone ſeemed to exhauſt it all. Since it becometh princes to do, like good huſbandmen, when they ſow the ground, which is to ſcatter, and not throw all in one place. The diſgrace and impriſonment of this overgrown monſter of power, for which he died of grief, ſoon recovered the ſtraying affections of the people, who were never more effectually gained, than by ſuch a ſacrifice; but this happy turn laſted not long.' The popular diſcontents were revived by the many changes in religion, and by the exorbitant power thrown into the hands of Cromwell, who was made privy-ſeal, lord-chamberlain, knight of the garter, and vicegerent-general in ſpirituals. To him lord Herbert attributes the taxes in 1536, which occaſioned a moſt formidable rebellion in Lincolnſhire, Yorkſhire, and other parts; and conſiſted of no leſs than 30,000 men, who were not diſperſed, but upon

upon promiſe of calling a free parliament. To him he likewiſe attributes the heavy taxes in 1539, which he ſays, 'equally oppreſſed both the clergy and the laity; and made the author of them ſo univerſally hated, that the king gave way to the accuſations againſt him; and then it was evident he muſt fall. For it was impoſſible that one, who meddled ſo much in all the great and public affairs, ſhould not in ſeveral ſo miſtake and err, as to incur the note of a criminal, when inquiſitions were made againſt him. The diſgrace and impriſonment of Cromwell was received by the people with many acclamations, that witneſſed their joy; ſo impatient are they uſually of the good fortune of Favourites. And all former faults being imputed to him, every one began to hope for a better age.' He was attainted in parliament of crimes great and enormous, and ſuch as deſerved capital puniſhment; but as he was not permitted to anſwer for himſelf, the proceedings were thought rigorous; but ſo few pitied him, that all was paſſed over, and he was executed on Tower-hill in July 1540.' The reſt of this reign, as it was free from any Prime Miniſter, ſo it was likewiſe from rebellions. Sir Walter Raleigh ſums up the character of king Henry VIII. in a few words of peculiar poignancy,

poignancy, ' That if all the pictures and patterns of a mercileſs prince were loſt to the world, they might again be painted to the life out of the hiſtory of this king.' But to ſoften the deformity of this pourtrait, let us view him in the more advantageous light, in which he is drawn by his hiſtorian, lord Herbert, who obſerves, that his bittereſt cenſurers agree, that he had all manner of perfections, either of nature or education, and a deep judgment in all affairs, to which he applied himſelf; that he was liberal and indulgent to his family and court, and even to ſtrangers; that he made choice of able and good men for the church, and of wiſe and grave counſellors for the ſtate; and, above all, was a prince of royal courage: in ſhort, that, with all his faults, he was courted by the chief potentates of Chriſtendom, and highly reverenced by his ſubjects in general.

Edward VI. ſucceeded his father Henry VIII. in 1547. During his ſhort reign of minority, he had no leſs than two Prime Miniſters. The firſt was the duke of Somerſet, who, though uncle to the king, and protector of the kingdom by election, could not avoid the fate, that in this country naturally attends on too much power, when veſted in the hands of one ſubject. The engroſſing

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the regal authority was his chief crime. This raiſed inſurrections through the kingdom; this united the chief of the nobility againſt him; this procured his impriſonment in the Tower in 1549; and loſt him his head in 1552. The ambitious author of his ruin, the duke of Northumberland, ſucceeded him in power, and ſoon became the object of the nation's hatred. He even contrived to fix the crown upon a lady, who had married into his own family; and when he brought his royal maſter to conſent to that ſettlement, he was ſtrongly ſuſpected to have poiſoned him. Sir John Hayward and Godwin both agree, that this ſuſpicion was founded on no trivial conjectures. The former of theſe writer ſays, 'the people left nothing unſpoken, which might ſerve to ſtir hatred againſt Northumberland, and pity towards the king; but the duke was nothing moved hereat; for being equally obſtinate, both in purpoſe and deſire, and mounting his hopes above the pitch of reaſon, he reſolved then to diſſemble no longer, but began openly to play his game; a game, for which he juſtly loſt his head in the ſucceeding reign.'

Mary I. only daughter of king Henry VIII. by Catherine of Spain, ſucceeded her brother Edward in 1533. She had in her ſhort reign

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but one Prime Miniſter, Gardiner, biſhop of Wincheſter, who made the nation a ſcene of blood and deſolation, in order to obtain for himſelf a cardinal's hat. For this purpoſe, he promoted and accompliſhed that hateful Spaniſh match, which, had it proved fruitful, muſt have made this iſland a province dependent on Spain. It met with the univerſal diſapprobation of the people, and raiſed a rebellion; which, but for an accidental diſappointment, had probably overturned the whole government. This avowed diſguſt occaſioned thoſe articles in the treaty of marriage, whereby the liberties of this kingdom were ſecured, as much as words could ſecure againſt power. Gardiner's blundering politics, in contriving ſo unnatural an alliance, ſoon involved the nation in a war with France, in which we loſt that important harbour of Calais; a loſs, which ſo affected the poor deluded queen, as to be the immediate occaſion of her death.

Elizabeth, the only daughter of Henry VIII. by Anne Bullen, ſucceeded her half ſiſter queen Mary, in 1558. In her long, wiſe and glorious reign, not one Prime Miniſter appeared. Her people's love was the ſtrong baſis of her government, as their intereſt was the only drift of her councils.

Camden ſays, 'On all, whom ſhe ever admitted into her miniſtry, ſhe beſtowed her favours with ſo much caution and ſo little diſtinction, as to prevent any from getting the aſcendant over her; whereby ſhe remained miſtreſs of herſelf, preſerving their affections, and her own power and authority entire.' Upon this maxim ſhe always modelled her miniſtry; therefore, in 1568, ſhe protected Cecil, afterwards lord Burleigh, even againſt her greateſt perſonal Favourite, the earl of Leiceſter, who with other lords had conſpired his overthrow; and ſome years after, ſhe as firmly ſupported Leiceſter againſt the artifices of Cecil. She ſent the earl of Leiceſter in 1586, to aſſiſt the Dutch againſt the king of Spain. He was thereupon choſen governor of the United Provinces; but no ſooner did the ſtates complain of him for abuſing his great power, but this juſt queen recalled her Favourite with diſgrace. The perſon, whom ſhe next honoured with the higheſt marks of her favour, was the earl of Eſſex; but when he began to affect a ſuperiority over his fellow-miniſters, aſſuming more authority than his miſtreſs intended for his ſhare, ſhe openly curbed his overweening ambition; turned him out of his employments, and called him to an account for his conduct in them. This

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aſpiring ſtateſman hereupon entered into cabals againſt her meaſures, in order to force himſelf into place. His principal ſcheme for this purpoſe was, it is commonly ſaid, by contriving a rupture between the queen and the next heir to the crown; which proving abortive, he was at laſt conſtrained to undergo the juſt puniſhment of his traiterous conſpiracies. This affair is ſet in a quite different light by others, as if he wanted to wreſt the ſceptre out of her hands which ſhe had intended for him.

It was the happineſs of this queen to be always ſerved by able and faithful miniſters, and this may be ſaid to be principally owing to her own capacity which furniſhed her with extraordinary lights of nice and acute diſcernment into the genius and talents of thoſe ſhe made choice of for her ſerxice. Hence, all offices, as well civil as military, were filled up under her with men equal to the duties of their employments; and if we ſhould find ſome not altogether unexceptionable, we may attribute it to mere favour, as favour like love, is generally blind, and may admit the unworthy as well as worthy to its careſſes. William Cecil, lord Burleigh, was a man of extraordinary worth and abilities, and was ſo formed by nature, and

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ſo poliſhed by education, that for all the qualities of a ſtateſman, adorned with all the virtues of a private man and a chriſtian, he had no ſuperior; and was one of thoſe few, who both lived and died with glory. He diſcharged the poſt of lord high treaſurer of England, with great fidelity and applauſe, and conſiderably augmented the public revenue and his own private fortune, though he abhorred the baſe and corrupt methods of amaſſing riches; for he ſeldom or never ſuffered any thing to be expended but for the queen's honour, the ſecurity of the nation, or the ſupport of its allies. He uſed to ſay, that he never cared to ſee the treaſury ſwell like a diſordered ſpleen, while the other parts of the commonwealth were in a conſumption. And he employed all poſſible means, and with good ſucceſs, to enrich the queen and the kingdom by his adminiſtration; it being a common expreſſion with him that nothing could be for the advantage of a prince, which in any meaſure leſſens his reputation: for which reaſon he never ſuffered the rents of lands to be raiſed, nor the old tenants to be ejected. He was highly reſpected by the nobility, and endeavoured always to advance men of merit. He was mild in his anſwers to perſons of all ranks; and took particular

care to prefer valuable men in the church and in the poſts of law. He was kind to his friends, gentle to his enemies, averſe to pomp, temperate in diet, and impenetrably ſecret. —Sir Nicholas Bacon, lord-keeper of the great ſeal during a great part of her reign, was the firſt in that office, who had all the dignity of a lord chancellor conferred on him; and his not being raiſed to that high title perhaps flowed from that modeſty, which he retained amidſt all his greatneſs, equal to what the ancient Greeks and Romans had carried with them to their higheſt advancement. He was a man of very penetrating genius, ſingular prudence, and admirable eloquence. He underſtood his miſtreſs well, and the times better. He could raiſe factions to ſerve the one, and allay them to ſuit the other. He had the deepeſt reach into affairs of any man at the council-table; the acuteſt head to penetrate into difficulties; the moſt comprehenſive judgment to determine the merits of a cauſe; the ſtrongeſt memory to recollect all circumſtances of a buſineſs at one view; the greateſt patience to debate and conſider; and the cleareſt reaſon to urge any thing, that came in his way, in council or chancery. His correſpondence with his fellow-ſtateſmen was exact; his apprehenſion of our laws and

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government clear; his model of both methodical; and his induſtry for the ſervice of the ſtate indefatigable.—The queen's ſecretary of ſtate, Sir Francis Walſingham, was one of the moſt refined politicians and moſt penetrating ſtateſmen, that ever any age produced. He had an admirable talent both in diſcovering and managing the ſecret receſſes of human nature: he had his ſpies in moſt courts in Chriſtendom, and allowed them a liberal maintenance; for his grand maxim was, that 'knowledge is never too dear.' He ſpent his whole time and faculties in the ſervice of the queen and her kingdoms; on which account her majeſty was heard to ſay, that 'in diligence and ſagacity he exceeded her expectation.' *Video & taceo*, was his ſaying, before it was his miſtreſs's motto. He could as well fit the humour of king James of Scotland with paſſages out of Xenophon, Thucydides, Plutarch, or Tacitus, as he could that of king Henry of France with Rabelais's conceits, or the Hollander with mechanic diſcourſes. He ſerved himſelf of the court factions as the queen did, neither advancing the one, nor depreſſing the other. His converſation was inſinuating and yet reſerved. He ſaw every man, and none ſaw him. 'His ſpirit, ſays Mr. Lloyd, was as public as his

parts; yet as debonnaire as he was prudent, and as obliging to the ſofter but predominant parts of the world, as he was ſerviceable to the more ſevere, and no leſs dextrous to work on humours, than to convince reaſon. He would ſay, he muſt obſerve the joints and flexures of affairs; and ſo could do more with a ſtory, than others could with an harangue. He always ſurprized buſineſs, and preferred motions in the heat of other diverſions; and if he muſt debate it, he would hear all, and with the advantage of foregoing ſpeeches, that either cautioned or confirmed his reſolutions, he carried all before him in concluſion, without reply. To him men's faces ſpoke as much as their tongues, and their countenances were indexes of their hearts. He would ſo beſet men with queſtions, and draw them on, that they diſcovered themſelves, whether they anſwered or were ſilent. Few letters eſcaped his hands; and he could read their contents, without touching the ſeals.'—More examples might be produced, but theſe will be ſufficient to ſhew what able miniſters were employed by queen Elizabeth; yet none of them were ever in quality of Prime Miniſters, nor had any of them ever ſuch an aſcendant as to diſpoſe of

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matters arbitrarily to the prejudice of other miniſters and of the ſtate.

Some are apt to cenſure queen Elizabeth's conduct, for making it a rule of her government to ſet at variance the principal men of the realm, and ſo give birth to cabals and parties, according to the abſurd counſel of Machiavel, *ſi vis regnare, divide.* This, 'tis certain, conſidered in the worſt light it is generally ſeen in, is a ſcheme of bad politics; and Philip de Comines, an eminent ſtateſman, blamed greatly thoſe princes, who ſeek not to compoſe diſſentions and quarrels amongſt their greateſt ſubjects, but rather nouriſh them by favouring one party more than another, whereby they contribute to the ſetting of their own houſe on fire: but queen Elizabeth, as may appear from what has been above ſaid, never favoured one particular party more than another, always taking care to balance one faction by the other, and to keep both at the ſame time attached to her intereſt and that of the nation. In the decline of life, when ſhe found herſelf incapacitated to preſerve this juſt equipoize, it proved the cauſe, and nothing elſe, of that bitter grief, which haſtened her death.

The blow, paſt recalling, ſhe ſtruck at her own authority, by cutting off Eſſex, alienated to ſo great a degree the people's affections

from her, that all ſhe did after was thought bitter, and her government too peeviſh and womaniſh for ſo warlike a nation: nor did ſhe decline leſs in the opinion of the court itſelf, no counſel daring after to appear, but what was ſuitable to the taſte and inclinations of the Cecils. And here it may be noted, with what circumſpection princes ought to play their game, ſince miniſters, their card-holders, not unfrequently aim at being arrant cheats, and intend more particularly their own benefit than their maſters. This appeared in the removal of Eſſex, a man thought far more neceſſary to the queen's ſervice, and England's ſafety, than thoſe who contrived his ruin; becauſe the ſtill bandying about of two factions, as it had been the conſtant former practice of this reign, was the moſt probable way to keep the queen, now grown old, from falling into contempt. The commands, which under both parties would have been readily obeyed, were after one had ſecured the uncontrouled management of affairs, wholly neglected; ſo that it was not poſſible for this once bright conſtellation, ſo near its declenſion, to influence another party, none having courage enough to run the hazard of an inevitable future ruin upon the contemplation of a year or two's power; which was more than her

her age and preſent weakneſs did with any probability promiſe.

It is now evident, that it would have been much better policy in the queen, to have made a conceſſion of the earl's life to the fears and wiſhes of the people, whereby their love muſt have been not only preſerved intire, but what was of more conſequence, ſo great a reſtraint muſt have been put upon the oppoſite cabal, as was likely to contain them within the compaſs of obedience; and this overſight was the more inexcuſable, becauſe the anceſtors of the earl's chiefeſt enemies had by the ſame arts rendered her ungrateful to the people of England, in a like caſe of ſeverity towards the duke of Norfolk. Thus it was that ſhe did not apprehend till it was too late, the wound given her own power by the death of Eſſex; and thus we may eaſily account for her not being able ever after, to moderate the inſolence of thoſe, who made no ſcruple of ſlighting her, and dinging openly in her ears the neceſſity ſhe lay under, to declare the Scots king her ſucceſſor, leſt the parliament ſhould for their own ſafety, be compelled to do it themſelves. But the principal, if not the only point of view herein, was to endear king James the more to ſome particular families, of which the moſt noble for birth,

found afterwards little cauſe to applaud their deſign. Nor did this ſtroke of fatality terminate in the ruin of the earl's friends alone, but extended to the diſadvantage of his maligners themſelves, witneſs Sir Walter Ralegh, who wanting ſtrength, tho' not wit, to be the rival of Robert Cecil, the great lord Burleigh's ſon and ſucceſſor in power, periſhed, becauſe not ſuppoſed to have humility enough to be his ſervant; it being more ſafe at court to have many enemies of equal power, than one falſe ambitious friend, who has attained to abſolute command. Agitations and tempeſts will ariſe from conſiderable factions in the courts of princes; but by counteracting one another, all bad effects will gradually blow over, and a calm will at laſt enſue, one party ſtill thinking it honourable to preſerve and advance what the other deems ſafe to ſuppreſs and deſtroy. This Ralegh was often heard to ſay he was not apprehenſive of, till his genius, like that of Socrates, had dictated it to him, as he was coming in a boat from the execution of the earl of Eſſex at the Tower; nor could the wiſeſt of his endeavours reſcue him from the dire effects of this portent, or to name it more properly, a neceſſary cauſe of ſuch events, as afterwards befell him.

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The death of Eſſex did then like the gloom of a melancholy-bringing cloud, ſhade the proſpect of the people's affection, from being ſo diſcernable at the ſetting of the queen's days, as it was during the dawn and meridian of her reign: yet, if Eſſex had been tryed by a peerage of angels, they would have paſſed a like ſentence upon him, or expoſed monarchy to contempt. Prudence therefore cannot lay the fault at the door of her juſtice, but the ill management of her mercy, as not knowing how to employ it to the beſt advantage of her future affairs; and though ſome may ſtill imagine no defect in her conduct, we may poſſibly learn to wonder, why ſhe did not make a better proviſion againſt contempt, 'till that hour a mere ſtranger to her, who before had been continually ſpirited up with flattery or ſucceſs.

There's another blot on this reign, with which the queen's prudence has been often upbraided. This is the manner of removing Mary queen of Scots. The ſkill or ſpirit of doing it in a clandeſtine way would have been more eligible. Whence, little thanks are due to thoſe who made the nation acceſſary by ſo ſolemn a tryal to the death of her they meant next to ſet up as rightful heir to the crown. The undoubted deſires and importunities of

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the Scots to have her put to death, the better to facilitate the ſucceſſion of their king James, cannot juſtify the want of diſcretion in the Engliſh nation, much leſs wipe away the ſhame of the act, which to haughty republicans ſeemed afterwards as a good precedent for trampling on majeſty in the perſon of Charles I. And if king James had indulged a little more his honour than his puſillanimity, he would not, when he might have had it in his power, have paſſed by unrevenged thoſe houſes that were ſo opprobriouſly ſtained with her blood.

However, nothing more commends the goodneſs even of the latter part of queen Elizabeth's reign, than that ſhe and her ſubjects ſhould have one and the ſame minion, as happened in Eſſex. The ſubjects were prepoſſeſſed with a confidence in her, that ſhe could not countenance an unworthy man; and it was no ſmall advance to the completing of this general approbation, that the people appeared not at the coſt to raiſe him, it being the cuſtom of this frugal princeſs to let her Favourites taſte and not to ſurfeit on the wealth of the nation. The names of monopolies and odious taxes were not intelligible to experience all her days; neither were her ears ſtopped againſt her people's complaints,

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ever thought by her juſt, and therefore proper to receive an immediate redreſs; and this was the cauſe that her parliaments were no further inquiſitive than ſhe was pleaſed to inform them.

Had her ſucceſſors, the Stuarts, retained the like moderation, their power would not have been brought to the teſt of the long and ſharp conflicts it paſſed through; and it was even queſtioned in the reign of king James I. whether that which ſupported queen Elizabeth's power, would not, by his miſapplication of it, utterly ruin his ſucceſſors. This is a point that will be ſet in a proper light, when the ſubject of the Revolution falls under conſideration. But as to queen Elizabeth, to ſum up all in a few words, ſhe was not only fortunate in her conduct at home, but able to diffuſe peace and plenty over ſuch neighbouring nations, as ſhe was adviſed by true reaſons of ſtate to maintain in ſtrength, and in a thriving and reſpectable condition.

James I. king of Scots, ſucceeded this great queen in 1603. We find it no where aſcertained that he was ever nominated by queen Elizabeth, as her ſucceſſor. During her reign there were no leſs than fourteen titles, good and bad, which by her ſilence were all kept quiet. For 'till ſhe made a public declaration, none

none had juſt cauſe to complain; and in caſe any endeavoured to have ſucceeded by force, ſhe had a fair choice out of the reſt to make oppoſition, not one being free from ſome conſiderable defect or other. The parliament remained intirely at her devotion: the commons were averſe to a ſtranger, or rather dreaded the conſequences of ſuch a choice; the peers were jealous of the houſe of Harford, or any perſon deducible out of their own body. 'Tis true, Eſſex bade faireſt for the crown; the wiſhes of the nation in general favoured him, ſeconded very probably by thoſe of the queen, till his indiſcretion had withdrawn the pleaſing ſmiles of fortune ſhe ſeemed to have treaſured up for him alone. The title of king James by blood was undoubtedly the beſt, as being deſcended from the eldeſt daughter of Henry VII. but this title was ſet aſide by Henry VIII. who being impowered to limit the ſucceſſion of the crown by act of parliament, ſettled it on the iſſue of his youngeſt ſiſter Mary, by Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, in caſe his two daughters Mary and Elizabeth died without iſſue.

But, as it is not the intent of this tract to enter into a diſcuſſion, whether king James aſcended the throne of England in virtue of his

his title, or by the procurement of the Cecil's faction; it will be enough to obſerve for the preſent purpoſe, that tho' he was too weak to tread in queen Elizabeth's ſteps, yet he reaped many happy benefits from her juſt adminiſtration; which had created in the minds of the whole nation ſuch an habitual reverence for the throne, as all his bad policy could never quite extinguiſh.

His was, in truth, the reign of Prime Miniſters. Sir Robert Car was the firſt, who, for ſome time, was forced to ſhare in power with Cecil, earl of Saliſbury; and ſo long affairs were tolerably well conducted; but upon Cecil's death, Sir Robert took full poſſeſſion of the king's favours alone; receiving all packets, and diſpatching anſwers, without the knowledge of the king or council; or, if the king did know, he ſeemed regardleſs of the conſequences, his love having hoarded up ſuch a confidence in him, that he laid out all on that ſtock. Secure of this love, the minion graſped at all employments, not caring whom he diſobliged, or what enemies he created for himſelf: nor would he ſuffer any place at court, or dignity in ſtate, to be beſtowed, which was not ſweetened with his ſmile, as giving it, or their bounty, who were to enjoy it. So that by his many foul devices,

and

and by his ſcandalous ſale of offices, it was thought he engroſſed a maſs of money, as if his ſoul intended to take her eaſe. This and his other miſcarriages procured him ſuch a number of underminers, that he ſtood upon a tottering foundation, having no ſupport but the royal favour, which was at laſt removed by laying before the king his crying guilt in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. The king conſented to his trial, and many of his creatures were put to death for their ſhare in his offences; but he himſelf, to the no ſmall diſcredit of his maſter, or rather an eternal blemiſh upon his juſtice, was only confined to an obſcure retreat, in which he languiſhed out his days, without that public puniſhment which he deſerved. He alſo lay under the moſt odious imputations of having occaſioned the death of Henry prince of Wales; at leaſt that event was thought by him ſo favourable to his authority, that he could ſcarce diſguiſe his little concern for it.

The next Prime Miniſter, was George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, raiſed from a low eſtate by the king's favour upon no other account than the comelineſs of his perſon. For many years he was ſole governor of all affairs, and enriched himſelf and all his relations with places, penſions and grants from

from the crown; for which he ſoon after rewarded his bountiful maſter in the manner which may be expected from all ſuch Favourites. The king had ſet his heart upon a match between his ſon and the infanta of Spain, which was juſtly odious to the whole nation; Buckingham therefore, who knew how univerſally he was deteſted, reſolved to become popular at the expence of his maſter's honour, by oppoſing all his meaſures in this affair. He firſt propoſed to the prince a a journey into Spain, which he afterwards forced the king to conſent to; 'and this, as lord Clarendon ſays, proved the means, whereby that deſigned marriage, which had been ſo many years in treaty, was ſolely broken; for, upon their return, the king found that the prince was totally alienated from all thoughts of, or inclination to the marriage; and that he, as well as the duke, was reſolved to break it, without his approbation or conſent?' The duke therefore, ſeconded by the countenance the prince gave him, engaged the parliament to addreſs the king againſt the Spaniſh match, and to enter into a war with Spain. He likewiſe projected the ruin of the earl of Middleſex, then lord treaſurer, and one of the king's moſt favoured miniſters; which he accompliſhed, by procuring ſome leading men

men in the houſe of commons to carry up an impeachment againſt that lord to the houſe of peers; and there conducting matters ſo, as to get him to be condemned to a large fine, and long impriſonment. And now knowing the king would never forgive him, he reſolved to keep his power in ſpite of him; which he found no other means of effecting, but by fomenting a breach between the king and prince, and engaging the ſon to head the oppoſition to his father's meaſures. The vexation this gave the old monarch, meeting with an aguiſh diſpoſition in his blood, ſoon turned it into a violent fever, of which he died; not without ſtrong ſuſpicion of his being poiſoned by a plaiſter, which Buckingham applied to his ſide. And this ſuſpicion was the more confirmed, it being well known, as lord Clarendon ſays, 'That when king James was informed what the duke had ſo confidently avowed in parliament, for which he had not authority, or the leaſt direction from him, and a great part whereof himſelf knew to be falſe; and that he had adviſed an utter breach of the treaty; and to enter upon a war with Spain, he was infinitely offended. So that he only wanted a reſolute and briſk counſellor to aſſiſt him in deſtroying the duke; and ſuch an one he promiſed himſelf in the earl

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of Briſtol, whom he expected every day.' No wonder then if the poor king did not long ſurvive the earl of Briſtol's return to England.

Charles I. ſucceeded him in 1625. 'He came to the crown, as lord Clarendon ſays, with as univerſal a joy in the people, as can be imagined. It was expected by thoſe, who knew the great jealouſy and indignation that the prince had heretofore conceived againſt the duke of Buckingham, for having been once very near ſtriking him, that he would now remember that inſolence, of which he then ſo often complained. But, inſtead of that, he placed his intire confidence in him, the moſt that ever king had ſhewed to any ſubject. All preferments in the church and ſtate were given by him; all his kindred and his friends were promoted to the degree in honour, riches, and offices, that he thought fit, and all his enemies and enviers were diſcountenanced, as he appointed. This ſoon wrought a viſible change in the affections of the nation towards their ſovereign.' The fruitleſs expeditions abroad, and the oppreſſive methods of raiſing money at home, joined to the innate hatred this nation bears to Prime Miniſters, raiſed a diſcontent againſt the government. In 1628, Sir Edward Coke, lord

chief juſtice of England, having in parliament propoſed and framed the Petition of Rights, and having alſo vindicated the rights of the houſe of commons, to proceed againſt any ſubject, how high ſoever, who miſled his ſovereign to the prejudice of his ſubjects, made a memorable ſpeech to the following effect: 'We have dealt with that duty and moderation, that never was the like, *rebus ſic ſtantibus*, after ſuch a violation of the liberties of the ſubjects: let us take this to heart. In 30 Ed. III. were they then in doubt, in parliament, to name men that miſled the king? They accuſed John de Gaunt, the king's ſon, and lord Latimer and lord Nevil, for miſadviſing the king, and they went to the Tower for it. Now, when there is ſuch a downfal of the ſtate, ſhall we hold our tongues? How ſhall we anſwer our duties to God and men? 7 Hen. IV. Parl. Rot. N° 31, 32. and 11 Hen. IV. N° 13. there the council are complained of, are removed from the king; they mewed up the king, and diſſuaded him from the common good; and why are we now retired from that way we were in? Why may we not name thoſe that are the cauſe of all our evils? In 4 Hen. III. and in 27 Ed. III. and 13 R. II. the parliament moderateth the king's prerogative; and nothing grows to abuſe, but

but this houſe hath power to treat of. What ſhall we do? Let us palliate no longer; if we do, God will not proſper us. I think the duke of Buckingham is the cauſe of all our miſeries; and, 'till the king be informed thereof, we ſhall never go out with honour, nor ſit with honour here; that man is the grievance of grievances; let us ſet down the cauſes of all our diſaſters, and all will reflect upon him?' This ſpeech was ſeconded by Mr. Selden, and at length it was agreed to frame a remonſtrance to the king, and therein to name the duke of Buckingham, as the great author of their grievances. Accordingly, a remonſtrance was drawn up, full of duty and reſpect to the king, as well as zeal and fidelity to the public, in which the duke of Buckingham, and the biſhops Neale and Laud, are expreſsly named, as the authors of thoſe calamities which the nation felt at that time. However, the king, impatient of all proceedings againſt him, diſſolved the parliament; but the duke ſoon after, when he was meditating to repair the diſgrace of his ſhameful defeat at the iſle of Rhee, by embarking for the relief of Rochelle, then beſieged by the French, was aſſaſſinated at Portſmouth by one John Felton, who committed that fact without any other inducement or encouragement,

than what the belief, that he ſhould do God and his country good ſervice by deſtroying an enemy to both, inſpired him with. The popular writers of thoſe times are not backward in ſaying, that Felton was excited to what he did, by ſome demon, if not the genius of our nation.

The death of this Prime Miniſter and Favourite, the news of which was acceptable almoſt every where it came, was far from allaying the ferment the nation was in. Lord Clarendon himſelf ſays, 'The venom of this time encreaſed and got vigour, 'till from one licence to another it proceeded, until the nation was corrupted to that monſtrous degree, that it grew ſatiated and weary of the government.' Indeed, continuing the ſame meaſures, this Prime Miniſter had ſet on foot, till the liberties of the nation were thought in danger; and in the end, liſtening almoſt intirely to the counſel of Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford, brought on that diſmal ſcene of blood and confuſion, in which the king was unhappily deprived of his crown, liberty, and life.

The earl of Strafford, from a buſy ſtickler for liberty, became the inſtrument of arbitrary power. When he firſt ſerved in parliament, he conſtantly appeared in oppoſition to the

the intereſts of the court. In May 1627, he was committed a priſoner to the Marſhalſea by the lords of the council for refuſing the royal loan; and about ſix weeks after this impriſonment, confined at Dartford in Kent, but releaſed about the Chriſtmas following. In the parliament of 1628, he exerted himſelf with great vigour againſt the adminiſtration of the government, inſiſting upon the Petition of Rights, and propoſing, what paſſed into a reſolution of the houſe, that the redreſs of grievances, and the granting of ſupplies, ſhould go hand in hand. However, at the end of that parliament, he was reconciled to the duke of Buckingham, and conſequently to the meaſures of the court, to which he became firmly attached, and was conſtantly afterwards the greateſt zealot for advancing the power of the crown. His conduct in Ireland was ſo ſatisfactory to the king, that he was advanced to the dignity of lord lieutenant of that kingdom, and that of earl of Strafford; and, in September 1640, was elected a knight of the garter. But this diſtinction was a very ſhort-lived ſatisfaction to him; for, upon the meeting of the parliament in November following, he was impeached of high treaſon, and committed to the Tower. His trial was the moſt ſolemn that was ever known,

and laſted eighteen days; during which he defended himſelf with ſuch addreſs, that the commons doubting, whether the lords would give judgment againſt him, paſſed a bill for attainting him of high treaſon, which went through the houſe of peers likewiſe; and at laſt was conſented to, tho' with extreme reluctance by the king, who ſigned a commiſſion for paſſing it. He was beheaded on Tower-hill on the 12th of May, 1641. Lord Clarendon acknowledges, that the earl in his government of Ireland, had been compelled, by reaſon of ſtate, to exerciſe many acts of power, and had indulged ſome to his own appetite and paſſion; and as he was a man of too high and ſevere a deportment, and too great a contemner of ceremony to have many friends at court, ſo he could not but have enemies enough. 'But he was a man, continues that noble hiſtorian, of great parts and extraordinary endowments of nature, not unadorned with ſome addition of art and learning, though that again was more improved and illuſtrated by the other; for he had a readineſs of conception, and ſharpneſs of expreſſion, which made his learning thought more, than in truth it was. He was no doubt of great obſervation, and a piercing judgment, both in things and perſons; but his too great

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ſkill in perſons made him judge the worſe of things; for it was his misfortune to live in a time, wherein very few wiſe men were equally employed with him, and ſcarce any, but the lord Coventry, (whoſe truſt was more confined) whoſe faculties and abilities were equal to his. So that, upon the matter, he relied wholly upon himſelf; and diſcerning many defects in moſt men, he too much neglected what they ſaid or did. Of all his paſſions pride was moſt predominant; which a moderate exerciſe of ill fortune might have corrected and reformed, and which the hand of heaven ſtrangely puniſhed, by bringing his deſtruction upon him by two things that he moſt deſpiſed, the people, and Sir Harry Vane. In a word, the epitaph which Plutarch records that Sylla wrote for himſelf, may not unfitly be applied to him, 'That no man did ever exceed him, either in doing good to his friends, or in doing miſchief to his enemies;' for his acts of both kinds were moſt notorious.'

It appears from the occurrences of the earl of Strafford's trial, how hateful the meaſures of the court were at the meeting of this parliament. Every thing unpopular, unjuſt, and odious had been put in practice, in order to be able to do without parliaments, and to rule

by will and pleaſure. Thoſe who had ſuffered for their oppoſition to injuſtice and tyranny, were now the favourites of the people. They were applauded and careſſed every where; nor could any with ſafety open their mouths againſt them. In this temper were the people when Charles I. by dire neceſſity, was compelled to call this memorable parliament; a parliament, ever to be celebrated and admired by the lovers of liberty, for its reſolution, firmneſs, and public ſpirit. The people rejoiced; they hoped the time was now come when they might utter their grievances with impunity, and expect redreſs. Accordingly, for the moſt part, they took great care in the choice of their repreſentatives, as eſteeming it of the utmoſt importance to their religion and liberties. Whoever hoped for the honour of a ſeat in parliament muſt, at leaſt have promiſed fair, and appeared hearty in the cauſe of his country. Men of this character were not wanting; and though ſome friends to tyranny, and future apoſtates, found means to enter, the majority were honeſt and upright, of fair intentions and firm reſolutions. ---Lord Clarendon ſpeaking of them, ſays, 'In the houſe of commons were many perſons of wiſdom and gravity, who being poſſeſſed of great and plentiful fortunes, though they

they were undevoted enough to the court, had all imaginable duty for the king, and affection for the government eſtabliſhed by law or ancient cuſtom; and, without doubt, the major part of that body conſiſted of men who had no mind to break the peace of the kingdom, or to make any conſiderable alteration in the government of church or ſtate; and therefore all inventions were ſet on foot from the beginning to work on them and corrupt them, by ſuggeſtions " of the dangers which threatened all that was precious to the ſubject in their liberty and their property, by overthrowing or overmaſtering the law, and ſubjecting it to an arbitrary power, and by countenancing popery to the ſubverſion of the proteſtant religion;" and then, by infuſing terrible apprehenſions into ſome, and ſo working upon their fears " of being called in queſtion for ſomewhat they had done, by which they would ſtand in need of their protection;" and raiſing the hopes of others, " that, by concurring with them, they ſhould be ſure to obtain offices, and honours, and any kind of preferment." Though there were too many corrupted and miſled by theſe ſeveral temptations, and others who needed no other temptations than from the fierceneſs of their own natures, and the malice they had

contracted againſt the church and againſt the court; yet the number was not great of thoſe in whom the government of the reſt was veſted, nor were there many who had the abſolute authority to lead, though there was a multitude diſpoſed to follow.' What their views and deſigns were, the ſame author tells us,—' There was obſerved a marvellous elated countenance in many of the members of parliament before they met together in the houſe; the ſame men, who ſix months before, were obſerved to be of very moderate tempers, and to wiſh that gentle remedies might be applied, without opening the wound too wide, and expoſing it to the air, and rather to cure what was amiſs, than too ſtrictly to make inquiſition into the cauſes and original of the malady, talked now in another dialect both of things and perſons; and ſaid that they muſt now be of another temper than they were the laſt parliament; that they muſt not only ſweep the houſe clean below, but muſt pull down all the cobwebs which hung in the top and corners, that they might not breed duſt, and ſo make a foul houſe hereafter; that they had now an opportunity to make their country happy, by removing all grievances, and pulling up the cauſes of them by the roots, if all men would do their duties; and

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uſed much other ſharp diſcourſe to the ſame purpoſe.'—And what is there marvellous in this? Theſe men had by very late and freſh experience, found that the king was obſtinately bent on his old courſes, cheriſhed the ſame tools of tyranny, hated the ſons of freedom, and even dared to impriſon men for doing their duty in parliament: I ſay, they lately had new proofs of it, and therefore were not to be blamed for their ſharp diſcourſe or ſharper actions.

Immediately, on the opening of this parliament, we find great complaints made of grievances, not only by Mr. Pymme (alone mentioned by lord Clarendon, who has confounded the buſineſs of grievances with lord Strafford's affair) but alſo by Mr. Capel, afterwards lord Capel, Sir Henry Bellaſis, Sir John Wray, Sir Hugh Cholmely, Sir Philip Muſgrave, Sir Francis Seymour, Sir John Packington, Sir Thomas Barrington, Sir John Colepepper, and others. The grievances were threefold; 1. Some againſt the privilege of parliament; 2. Others to the prejudice of religion; and 3. Another ſort againſt the liberty of the ſubject. Theſe were enlarged on with no unnatural warmth; their illegality and hardſhips manifeſted; the inſtruments of oppreſſion pointed out, and their demerits

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diſplayed; and remedies for removing the grievances were propoſed; by declaring the law where it was doubtful, and providing for the execution of the law where it was clear. And to the honour of the houſe of commons, it muſt be ſaid, that they went briskly to work, and accompliſh'd many of their good intentions, uninfluenced by hope, unawed by fear. They impeached the king's chief miniſters, Strafford (as abovementioned) and Laud, and brought them deſervedly to the block; they declared the judgment of the judges to be falſe and illegal; they aboliſhed thoſe vile courts of the High Commiſſion and Star-Chamber, in which ſo many oppreſſive and cruel ſentences had been paſſed; they gave liberty to thoſe in captivity for their oppoſition to the prelates; they provided for the frequency of parliaments, the diſuſe of which had given boldneſs to the courtiers; they clipt the wings of the eccleſiaſtics, and brought them nearer to their firſt inſtitution; and they would have done many other things, equally uſeful to that age and poſterity, had they not been deſerted by ſome, oppoſed by others, and hindered by royal authority. But they continued their endeavours notwithſtanding, and, for the public good, expoſed their fortunes, themſelves, and their poſterity, to the civil

civil war, in which, had they been overcome, they would all have been treated as traitors and rebels. Mr. Neville had reaſon then for characterizing them, at leaſt twenty or thirty of them, ‘ as men of high and unqueſtionable reputation, who having ſtood their ground in ſeven parliaments before, which in the two laſt reigns, [this was wrote in the time of Charles II.] had been diſſolved abruptly and in wrath, and having reſiſted the fear of impriſonment and great fines for their love to England, as well as the temptation of money and offices to betray it, both inferred by the wicked counſellors of that age, tending both to the ruin of our juſt rights, and the detriment of their maſter's affairs ; I ſay, having conſtantly, and with great magnanimity and honour, made proof of their integrity, they had acquired ſo great a reputation, that not only the parliament, but even almoſt the whole people, ſtuck to and were ſwayed by them.’

That there was a glorious band of patriots in the houſe of commons, in the beginning of the long parliament, is too evident to be denied ; but their after-proceedings were unſuitable to theſe glorious beginnings, and they are juſtly repreſented by Milton, and others of their own writers, as black, odious and deteſt-

deteſtable. Elated by proſperity, influenced by the prieſthood, enſnared by wealth and power, or heated by oppoſition, it is very poſſible many things were done by them which can never be juſtified, tho' allowances be made for times of diſorder and confuſion; more eſpecially the permitting their clergy to tyrannize over the conſciences of men, like the prelates that went before them. This latter, indeed, ſeems to have given Milton the greateſt diſguſt, who was a mortal foe to the dominion of prieſts, and a zealous aſſertor of the rights of conſcience. He could not bear that the ſame kind of men ſhould complain of and exerciſe oppreſſion; that thoſe, in whoſe cauſe he had drawn his pen, ſhould defeat all his hopes, and manifeſt, that it was not liberty but power they had been contending for;

Becauſe you have thrown off your prelate lord,
And with ſtiff vows renounc'd his liturgy,
To ſeize the widow'd whore Plurality,
From them, whoſe ſin ye envied, not abhorr'd;
Dare ye for this adjure the civil ſword,
To force our conſciences that Chriſt ſet free,
And ride us with a claſſic hierarchy.——

Monteſquieu ſeems to account well for a behaviour which appears at firſt ſight ſo unnatural. 'It is a principle, ſays he, that every religion

religion which is perſecuted becomes itſelf perſecuting; for as ſoon as by ſome accidental turn it ariſes from perſecution, it attacks the religion which perſecuted it; not as a religion, but as a tyranny.'

The parliament, however, rectified their conduct, even on this head, to the ſore diſpleaſure of the lordly preſbyters, and kept them from miſuſing and oppreſſing their brethren: ſo that upon the whole, tho' they were not free from faults, yet were they, in the eyes of the knowing and unprejudiced, the ableſt and nobleſt ſet of people this nation ever produced. Mr. Trenchard celebrates their actions in the following manner. 'The parliament governed for five years, who made their names famous through the whole earth, conquered their enemies in England, Scotland and Ireland; reduced the kingdom of Portugal to their own terms; recovered our reputation at ſea; overcame the Dutch in ſeveral famous battles; ſecured our trade, and managed the public expences with ſo much frugality, that no eſtates were gained by private men upon the public miſeries; and at laſt were paſſing an act for their own diſſolution, and ſettling the nation in a free and impartial commonwealth; of which the army being afraid, thought it neceſſary to diſſolve them.'

From thence the nation paſſed into a military government, under the influence and direction of Cromwell, by the name and ſtile of Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions and territories thereunto belonging. The exerciſe of his power was as arbitrary as that of any king. He ſet up and diſſolved parliaments at diſcretion; and nothing ſeemed wanting to him to ſatiate the luſt of his ambition but the title of king; a vain pretence in him to give weight to his houſe of peers, and other eſſential points of government. His parliament was ready to come into his meaſures; but his beſt friends and the principal officers of the army vigorouſly oppoſed them, having petitioned the parliament: 'That they had hazarded their lives againſt monarchy, and were ſtill ready ſo to do in defence of the liberties of the nation; that having obſerved in ſome men great endeavours to bring the nation again under their old ſervitude, by preſſing their general to take upon him the title and government of a king, in order to deſtroy him, and weaken the hands of thoſe who were faithful to the public, they therefore humbly deſired that they would diſcountenance all ſuch perſons and endeavours, and to continue ſteadfaſt to the old cauſe,

cauſe, for the preſervation of which, they, for their parts, were moſt ready to lay down their lives.'—This petition was ſubſcribed by two colonels, ſeven lieutenant-colonels, eight majors, and ſixteen captains, who with ſuch officers of the houſe as were of the ſame opinion, made up the majority of thoſe relating to that part of the army which was then quartered about the town. It is difficult to determine, whether the houſe or Cromwell was more ſurprized at this unexpected addreſs; but certainly both were infinitely diſturbed at it. His opponents we muſt ſuppoſe to be men of principle, as chuſing rather to diſoblige him, and forfeit their employments, than to build again what they had deſtroyed. Certain it is, the aſſuming of the diadem was eligible in Cromwell's own eye, and in the eye of Thurloe, and therefore it may well be thought they ſaw many advantages in it; and it appears at firſt ſight that it would have reſtored the conſtitution, as founded on an original contract. The parliament conſiſting of two houſes, ſuited well with the title of king, which was at firſt intended for the protector; and probably, if that had been aſſumed, many of the ancient nobility and gentry would have been pleaſed to have had ſeats in the upper-houſe. But tho' Cromwell was fruſtrated in his

hopes of the crown, the project of a houſe of lords was continued. Some were fit, but not willing to ſerve; others willing and deſirous, but very unfit. All the old nobility, lord Eure excepted, refuſed to ſit in this new aſſembly, on account perhaps of the mean original of ſome of the company, or of the authority by which they were convened. However, they did nothing of any importance. The ſecluded members being admitted into the houſe of commons, turned all things againſt the court; refuſed any intercourſe with the new houſe of lords; and behaved ſo ill in the eye of the protector, that, in great heat, he diſſolved them. This was the laſt parliament that ſat during Cromwell's life, 'he being compelled to wreſtle with the difficulties of his place, ſays Mr. Maidſtone, ſo well as he could, without parliamentary aſſiſtance, and in it met with ſo great a burden, as (I doubt not to ſay it, drank up his ſpirits, of which his natural conſtitution yielded a vaſt ſtock) and brought him to his grave.' This ſeems to confirm what biſhop Burnet ſays, 'that it was generally believed that his life and all his arts were exhauſted at once, and that if he had lived much longer, he could not have held things together.' Mr. Cowley obſerves, 'that he ſeemed evidently

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to be near the end of his deceitful glories, his own army growing at laſt as weary of him, as the reſt of the people; and he died with grief and diſcontent, becauſe he could not attain to the honeſt name of a king, and the old formality of a crown, though he had before exceeded the power by a wicked uſurpation.'—That care, anxiety, diſappointment, and vexation prey on the ſpirits, and waſte the conſtitution, is known to all; that theſe were the lot of Cromwell, as they are of moſt of thoſe who are placed on the pinnacle of glory, and attentive to the calls of their ambition, or their fame, may very eaſily be conceived; that the government of Cromwell was greatly embarraſſed by the madneſs of parties, the eſtrangement of friends, and the want of money to pay the armies which it was neceſſary to keep on foot: I ſay that this was ſo, is too evident to be denied. But had the life of the protector been prolonged, it is not impoſſible he might have got the better of his difficulties, and maintained his poſt in ſpite of all oppoſition. For we are to remember it was Cromwell who had dared to ſeize the government; to raiſe money by his own authority; to create and diſſolve parliaments; to combat with kings, and to ſcatter terror through nations. By what means he

would have done this, whether by ſecuring Fleetwood and Deſbrowe, to whom he owed his diſappointment in aſſuming the crown, and calling another parliament, muſt be left to conjecture. The latter he certainly had thoughts of before the ſickneſs that put a period to his life.

The miniſter chiefly employed and conſulted by Cromwell, was John Thurloe, Eſq; who is deſervedly tranſmitted to poſterity in a very favourable light. He was a man of a very amiable character in private life; and, in the height of his power, exerciſed all poſſible moderation towards perſons of every party. His manner of writing is remarkable above moſt of his cotemporaries for its conciſeneſs, perſpicuity, and ſtrength. But the moſt authentic teſtimony of his abilities is that vaſt collection of his ſtate-papers, now in the hands of the public; which place the hiſtory of Europe in general, as well as that of Great Britain and its dominions, during that remarkable period, in the cleareſt light; and ſhew at the ſame time his aſtoniſhing induſtry and application in the management of ſo great a variety of important affairs, which paſſed intirely through his hands, with a ſecrecy and ſucceſs not to be paralleled under any other government.

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We now come to the memorable epoch of the reſtoration of king Charles II. which happened in 1660. ‘ It is moſt true, and muſt never be denied, ſays lord Clarendon, that the people were admirably diſpoſed and prepared to pay all the ſubjection, duty, and obedience, that a juſt and prudent king could expect from them, and had a very ſharp averſion and deteſtation of all thoſe who had formerly miſled and corrupted them; ſo that except the General, who ſeemed to be poſſeſſed intirely of the affection of the army, and whoſe fidelity was now above any miſapprehenſion, there appeared no man whoſe power and intereſt could in any degree ſhake and endanger the peace and ſecurity the king was in; the congratulations for his return being ſo univerſal, from all the counties of England, as well as from the parliament and city; from all thoſe who had moſt ſignally diſſerved and diſclaimed him, as well as from thoſe of his own party and thoſe who were deſcended from them: inſomuch as the king was wont merrily to ſay, “ that it could be nobody's fault but his own that he had ſtayed ſo long abroad, when all mankind wiſhed him ſo heartily at home.” It cannot therefore but be concluded by the ſpectators of this wonderful change and acclamation of all degrees

of men, that there muſt be ſome wonderful miſcarriage in the ſtate, or ſome unheard of defect of underſtanding in thoſe who were truſted by the king in the adminiſtration of his affairs; that there could in ſo ſhort a time be a new revolution in the general affections of the people, that they grew even weary of that happineſs they were poſſeſſed of and had ſo much valued, and fell into the ſame diſcontents and murmurings which had naturally accompanied them in the worſt times.'

The fatal cauſes of theſe miſerable effects ſeem to be; firſt, an almoſt unbounded appetite in the king after all ſorts of pleaſures, which inſenſibly introducing an habitual depravation of the mind, made him remiſs, indolent, careleſs, and neglectful of the duties incumbent on his ſtation: Secondly, as a conſequence of this diſpoſition, the butt he was made of, or the prey he became to, the artifice, deſigns, and avarice of Favourites and Sycophants of all denominations: Thirdly, as another conſequence alſo of this diſpoſition, his giving into meaſures to the prejudice of his ſubjects and the diſhonour of his crown, whereby wicked miniſters, as a ſupport to luxurious life and the dignity of royalty, flattered his inbred notions of arbitrary ſway. Not but Charles II. had his lucid intervals,

and

and was in the main a prince of capacity; but all his good qualities, and ſome very valuable, were ſo clouded by his foibles, that little through ſo obſcure a medium could be diſcerned, to render his character amiable to poſterity, or his example an object of imitation to future princes.

He was firſt rather over-awed than byaſſed by the influence of general Monk, ſoon after created duke of Albemarle; and the General's lady, by her aſcendant over her huſband, lies under ſome foul imputations of avarice by the ſale of places. The companions of his exile and diſtreſs were thoſe that ſeemed naturally better intituled to his favour; and therefore, as lord Clarendon expreſſes it, 'had the keener appetites, and the ſtronger preſumption to puſh their fortunes in the infancy of their maſter's reſtoration, that other men might not be preferred before them, who had not "borne the heat of the day," as they had done.' Whence, lord Clarendon himſelf may be ſaid to ſtand firſt in the liſt for the ſignal ſervices rendered by him, both to father and ſon. But the king's want of a thorough ſenſe of the benefits he had received, ſo wrought upon him, that he could, on any intervening accident, part with and forget his beſt friends. Inſenſibility was a ſtrong ingredient in his

character, and ſeemed indeed ſo cloſely interwoven with his nature, that he was always prompt to obey its impulſe, except in the caſe of his boſom friends, his miſtreſſes. The faithful ſervant, and prudent and wiſe counſellor was no longer of any conſideration in lord Clarendon, when his duty compelled him to ſhew ſome oppoſition to his maſter's inclinations. The gravity and auſterity of his morals laid a reſtraint on him; and, at laſt, not able to bear the intruſion of ſuch a monitor, he eaſily conſented to his impeachment and baniſhment. This verifies the maxim of Philip de Comines, who ſays, 'that it ruins a man frequently to have done too good ſervice;' ſignifying that princes are more willing to have others beholding to them, than be beholding themſelves to others; and ſome when they ſee their obligation to any man ſo great, that they think they cannot conveniently reward him to his merit and ſatisfaction, look upon him as an eye-ſore, and ſeek one way or other to be rid of him. Lord Clarendon, to an impartial perſon, ſeems to have exculpated himſelf from whatever has been laid to his charge, and nothing, as he ſays himſelf in his Continuation, can be found in his conduct that can make his children aſhamed of his memory.

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The Cabal, that afterwards took place, was built upon the ruin of lord Clarendon. About this time, the parliament, which had carried the Royal Prerogative to a high pitch, might juſtly ſuppoſe, that the king had reaſon to be pleaſed with them, and would endeavour to preſerve a happy union with a parliament ſo devoted to him. But the king, inſtead of being content with the power aſcribed him by the parliament, thought it unworthy to found the extent of his authority upon acts of parliament only. Beſides, it was a pain to him to be forced to demand money, and to uſe for that purpoſe pretences notoriouſly falſe, tho' the parliament ſeemed to be ſatisfied with them. It would have been more agreeable to him to ſay, 'It is my will and pleaſure,' than to be obliged to uſe humble intreaties to the commons. This his Favourites were continually repreſenting to him; and if father Orleans is to be credited, his miniſters pretended great indignation to ſee a republican ſpirit creeping into the parliament, and engaging them in ſo many proceedings againſt the royal authority. Among other things the Triple Alliance, into which the republicans had forced the king contrary to his inclination, appeared to the miniſters an audacious uſurpation upon the Royal Prerogative, the conſe-

conſequences of which were to be prevented. Full of theſe reſentments, they perſuaded the king to render himſelf abſolute, to confine the parliament within bounds, and not to ſuffer a mixture of a republic with a monarchy, introduced by violence and encroachments, leſt this mixture ſhould in time produce a monſtrous anarchy, and expoſe England to a horrible confuſion, like that from which ſhe was ſo lately delivered. This hiſtorian's word may be ſo far taken, as we are aſſured by himſelf, that he was informed by James II. of the particulars of his own and his brother's reign.

This reſolution being taken, the king, who was acute enough, eaſily ſaw, that the execution of it required an artful and cautious conduct, and ſuch ſecret and imperceptible meaſures, as would not too plainly diſcover his intentions: for he could not ſuppoſe, that, becauſe he deſired to be abſolute, the people of England would immediately give up their liberties and privileges. It was therefore neceſſary to lead them to it inſenſibly and by degrees; and to that end he wanted a ſecret council, compoſed of few perſons in whom he might intirely confide, and whoſe intereſt it was to accompliſh this deſign. The ordinary council was not proper

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to conduct this affair; for, beſides that ſome counſellors had a right to their places, it was very difficult to engage ſo many perſons of the firſt rank in ſuch a plot. The king therefore eſtabliſhed a cabinet council of five perſons only, namely, Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Aſhley, Lauderdale; and it was called the Cabal, as the initial letters of theſe five names compoſe that word.

Sir Thomas Clifford †, according to father Orleans, only wanted a ſtage, where ſound reaſon and virtue were more frequent, than at this time in England, to appear ſuperior to the others. He was a declared and known abettor of the church of Rome, ſo that he took no pains to diſguiſe his religion. It was he who after the triple alliance was concluded, ſaid, 'Notwithſtanding all this noiſe, we muſt yet have another war with Holland.' The event juſtified his prediction, and it is probable the ſcheme was then formed, and he in the ſecret.

Henry Bennet, earl of Arlington, ſecretary of ſtate, was, acccording to biſhop Burnet, a proud man; and his parts were ſolid, but not quick. He had the art of obſerving the king's temper, and managing it beyond all the men of that time. He was believed a pa-

† Afterwards Lord High Treaſurer.

piſt;

piſt; he had once profeſſed it, and at his death again reconciled himſelf to the church of Rome. Yet in the whole courſe of his miniſtry he ſeemed to have made it a maxim, that the king ought to ſhew no favour to popery, ſince all his affairs would be ruined, if ever he turned that way; which made the papiſts become his mortal enemies, and accuſe him as an apoſtate, and the betrayer of their intereſts.

George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, the king's Favourite, had a very lively wit: he might have made a great miniſter of ſtate, had not his ſtrong paſſion for pleaſures and all ſorts of debauches, diverted him from buſineſs. He gloried in having no religion, and was reckoned an Atheiſt.

Sir Anthony Aſhley Cooper was one of the greateſt geniuſes England had produced for many years. This is the teſtimony equally given of him by friends and enemies. Father Orleans gives the following character of him: 'He was the moſt capable of the five to manage any important undertaking, and was the ſoul of this. He had a vaſt genius; was penetrating, bold, and equally ſteady both on the right and the wrong ſide; a conſtant friend, but an implacable enemy, and the more dangerous, as being void of all religion

and conſcience; whence it was the eaſier for him to plot, becauſe he was not deterred by the number or enormity of any crimes, when he judged them neceſſary to preſerve himſelf, or deſtroy thoſe who had incurred his hatred.' It is neceſſary to obſerve here, that this character of the earl of Shaftsbury is not founded upon what he had done before his admiſſion into the cabinet council, but upon what he did afterwards. Mr. Locke ſpeaks otherwiſe of him, but ſays nothing to his advantage in reſpect to religion.

The duke of Lauderdale was the moſt proper of the five to ſerve the king in this affair. He was now as much for exalting the prerogative, as he was formerly for depreſſing it; and having undertaken to make his majeſty's power in Scotland abſolute and arbitrary, he ſtretched the power of the crown to all kinds of exceſſes, and aſſumed to himſelf a ſort of lawleſs adminiſtration, the exerciſe of which was ſuppoſed to be granted him upon the large promiſes he had made. In the proſecution of this deſign, being more apprehenſive of other mens officious interfering, than diſtruſtful of his own abilities, he took care to make himſelf the king's ſole informer, as well as his ſole ſecretary; and by this means, not only the affairs of Scotland were deter-

determined in the court of England, without any notice taken of the king's council in Scotland, but ſtrict obſervation was alſo made of all Scotſmen, who came to the Engliſh court; and to attempt an addreſs or acceſs to his majeſty, otherwiſe than by his lordſhip's mediation, was to hazard his perpetual reſentment. By theſe ways he gradually made himſelf almoſt the only ſignificant perſon of the whole Scots nation; and in Scotland itſelf procured to himſelf ſo ſovereign an authority, as to name the privy-counſellors, to place and remove the lords of the ſeſſion and exchequer, to grant gifts and penſions, to levy and diſband forces, to appoint general officers, and to tranſact all matters of importance. He was, according to lord Clarendon, a man of parts and induſtry, but loved pleaſures too much; proud, ambitious, inſolent, imperious, flattering, and diſſembling; and had courage enough not to fail where it was abſolutely neceſſary, and no impediment of honour to reſtrain him from doing any thing that might gratify any of his paſſions; nor was his fiery ſpirit capable of any moderation. Dr. Kennet likewiſe obſerves, that he had neither morals nor any reputation or integrity; but was of an impetuous ſpirit, a great promoter of arbitrary power, and indeed the under-

underminer of epiſcopacy in Scotland, by laying it on a new foundation, the pleaſure of the king. Biſhop Burnet thus characterizes him. 'He made a very ill appearance, and his whole manner was rough and boiſterous, and very unfit for a court. He was learned not only in Latin, in which he was a maſter, but in Greek and Hebrew. He had read a great deal in divinity, and almoſt all the hiſtorians, ancient and modern; ſo that he had great materials. He had with theſe an extraordinary memory; and a copious but unpoliſhed expreſſion. He had a violence of paſſion, that carried him often to fits like madneſs, in which he had no temper. If he took a thing wrong, it was a vain thing to ſtudy to convince him; that would rather provoke him to ſwear he would never be of another mind: he was to be let alone; and perhaps he would have forgot what he had ſaid, and come about of his own accord. He was a very cold friend, but a very violent enemy. He ſeemed at firſt to deſpiſe wealth; but he delivered himſelf up afterwards to luxury and ſenſuality; and by that means run into a vaſt expence, and ſtuck at nothing that was neceſſary to ſupport it. He was in his principles much againſt popery and arbitrary government; and yet by a fatal train of paſ-

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ſions and intereſts, he made way for the former, and had almoſt eſtabliſhed the latter. And whereas ſome by a ſmooth deportment made the firſt beginnings of tyranny leſs diſcernible and unacceptable; he by the fury of his behaviour heightened the ſeverity of his miniſtry, which was more like the cruelty of an inquiſition, than the legality of juſtice. With all this, he was a preſbyterian, and retained his averſion to king Charles I. and his party to his death. The duke of Buckingham uſed to call him a man of a blundering underſtanding.'

If to theſe five members of the Cabal we join the king and the duke of York, it will be found, that all the ſeven were for an abſolute and arbitrary government. The firſt thing reſolved on, was to break the Triple Alliance: the ſecond to have a war with Holland, in order to furniſh the king with a pretence to keep on foot both land and ſea-forces; and the true reaſon of engaging in this war, was as much to put it out of the power of the States to aſſiſt the Engliſh, as to have a pretence for raiſing forces: the third, to enter into a ſtrict alliance with France: the fourth, as a conſequence of the reſt, was to render the king abſolute, or, in their language, a great prince, under which article

Rapin

Rapin comprizes the eſtabliſhment of popery, tho' the article of religion is omitted by the king's adherents.

The firſt fruits of the Cabal's projects, was ſhutting up the exchequer, by which the king, beſides the ſupplies granted him in parliament, was ſure of fifteen hundred thouſand pounds. Sir Thomas Clifford, and the earl of Shaftſbury, both claiming the merit of this enterprize, were raiſed, the firſt, to the important poſt of lord high treaſurer; the ſecond, ſhortly after, to that of lord chancellor. This was followed by a declaration from the king for liberty of conſcience; but the commons vigorouſly oppoſing it, the king found himſelf extremely embarraſſed, and the Cabal were ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at his irreſolution, all their hopes being founded on his ſteadineſs. They were to engage in a conteſt, in which they flattered themſelves to render the king victorious; but they ſaw the king retreating when he ſhould have prepared for battle; and conſequently the hopes of victory were intirely vaniſhed. But this was not all they had to fear; they were in danger of being abandoned by the king, after this firſt ſtep, to the reſentment of the two houſes; for how could they hope for the protection of the king, who

had juſt given ſuch manifeſt marks of his own fear.

The earl of Arlington had in ſome meaſure deſerted the Cabal, by adviſing the king to revoke his declaration for liberty of conſcience. The earl of Shafteſbury ſoon followed him, but in a manner more ſurpriſing, more public, and with more remarkable circumſtances. This was the ſecond time he had experienced the king's inconſtancy and want of reſolution. The affair of the declaration was common to him with the reſt of the Cabal; but the writs, iſſued out of chancery for the election of members to fill the vacancies in parliament were peculiar to him. He had undertaken to iſſue theſe writs as chancellor, on pretence of ſome precedents which were never known, upon the king's poſitive promiſe to ſtand by him; and yet he was deſerted by the king, at the firſt inſtance of the commons, or rather before their complaints. Having therefore reaſon to fear a vigorous proſecution for this fact, he believed, he had no other way to divert the impending ſtorm, than by quitting the king's party, and throwing himſelf into the contrary: he executed this reſolution, ſays father Orleans, the day after the king reſolved to revoke his declaration for liberty of conſcience, appearing in the houſe of lords, at the head of

of the moſt violent party, againſt the catholic religion, the Dutch war, and the union with France. He did more, if father Orleans is to be credited; for, in a full houſe, he diſcovered the reaſons which had induced the king to grant liberty of conſcience, join with France, and declare war againſt the States.

The members of the Cabal found means to eſcape the inquiries and proſecution of the parliament. The duke of Buckingham endeavoured to clear himſelf by caſting all the odium upon the earl of Arlington, who being admitted to make his defence, anſwered ſome parts of the duke's ſpeech, but was ſo far from giving ſatisfaction with regard to his own conduct, that the houſe of commons immediately drew up articles of impeachment againſt him, wherein he was charged to have been a conſtant and vehement promoter of popery and popiſh councils; to have been guilty of many undue practices in order to promote his own greatneſs; to have embezled and waſted the treaſure of the nation; and to have falſly and traiterouſly betrayed the important truſt repoſed in him, as a counſellor and principal ſecretary of ſtate. Upon this he appeared before the houſe of commons, and ſpoke much more than was expected; excuſing himſelf, tho' without blaming the

king. This had ſo good an effect, that tho' he, as ſecretary of ſtate, was more expoſed than any other, by the many warrants and orders which he had ſigned; yet he was acquitted by a ſmall majority. But the care which he took to preſerve himſelf, and his ſucceſs in it, loſt him his high favour with the king, as the duke of York was out of meaſure offended with him. The earl of Danby ſucceeded lord Clifford in the office of lord high treaſurer; and as for the duke of Lauderdale, his honours did not protect him from the indignation of the houſe of commons, by whom he was voted a grievance, and not fit to be truſted or employed in any office or place of truſt. And tho' his majeſty thought proper in 1674, to create him a peer of England, yet the commons the next year preſented an addreſs to the king to remove him from all his employments, and from his majeſty's preſence and counſels for ever; which addreſs was followed by another of the ſame kind in 1678, and by a third the year following.

The earl of Danby was now conſidered as the king's Prime Miniſter. He had a great genius and a ſolid judgment; and, as he diſapproved of the principals of the Cabal, he endeavoured to diſengage the king from the methods he had been led into by their counſels.

This

This drew upon him the enmity of the duke of York, and all the French faction; and theſe enemies were joined by another who had been his moſt intimate friend. This was Mr. Montague, ambaſſador in France, who, aſpiring to the office of ſecretary of ſtate, took it very ill, that the treaſurer had engaged to bring in Sir William Temple. Mr. Montague was the treaſurer's moſt dangerous enemy, becauſe he had private letters in his hands from that miniſter, relating to the negociation with France concerning the king's penſion. Articles of impeachment were hereupon drawn up againſt the treaſurer, with the intention to oblige him, for his own ſafety, to plead the king's orders for what he had done. It is certain, he was not ſo much aimed at as the king himſelf, and that it was intended by ſending him to the Tower, to ſhew the public, that the king and the duke of York were the real authors of all the evils of the kingdom. He afterwards eſcaped by pleading the king's pardon, and being diſmiſſed, the treaſury was put into commiſſion.

However, the ſtorm the earl of Shafteſbury had raiſed againſt the court, after deſerting the Cabal, was not to be quelled; he cauſed the king and duke to undergo the greateſt mortifications; and hence we may date all the

dark deſigns, and plots and counterplots which then prevailed; and for which many innocent perſons on both ſides ſuffered. Nor was there any relaxation of the turbulency and confuſion of the times on account of theſe and the excluſion-bill, till the king rid himſelf of the parliament, and reigned abſolute till his death without calling another.

James II. his brother, ſucceeded him in 1685. He aſſured his parliament, that he was determined to protect the church of England, and maintain the liberties and properties of his people; but the ſame meaſures were purſued as in the preceding reign, and in a ſhort time brought about the Revolution.

James II. abſtracting from his religious principles, has been conſidered even by his enemies, as a prince of conſummate talents, and as one extremely well fitted for the government of a mercantile nation as this is, being very intelligent in its commercial intereſts, and in the neceſſary regulations for that purpoſe. But his graſping at arbitrary power, a fault common to him with his predeceſſors, yet a fault not to be allowed of by the Britiſh conſtitution; and his ſtrenuous endeavours to ſubvert the eſtabliſhed religion of the land, by the introduction of his own compelled the nation into an opinion, tha

govern-

government could not any longer be ſafely truſted in his hands, without great reſtrictions impoſed by the nature of the original contract between king and people, to which he did not ſeem inclined to ſubmit.

Tho' the principles of nature and common ſenſe fully authorize reſiſtance to the civil magiſtrate in extreme caſes, and, of courſe, juſtify the revolution to every candid and diſpaſſionate man; yet there are many prejudices which hinder the proceedings in that affair from being ſeen in their true light. Whatever advantage the cauſe of liberty may receive from general reaſonings on the origin and nature of civil government, the greater part of our countrymen will conſider, and perhaps rightly, the enquiry into the conſtitution of their own government, as a queſtion of fact; that muſt be tried by authorities and precedents only; and decided at laſt by the evidence of hiſtorical teſtimony, not by the concluſions of philoſophy or political ſpeculation.

There is little room to doubt but that the form of the Engliſh government has, at all times, been free, and that it is on principles of freedom it has been continually and uniformly conducted. Some perhaps may be inclined to think the contrary: for, beſides

the name, and other enſigns of majeſty, in common with thoſe who wear the moſt deſpotic crowns, the whole execution of our laws, and the active part of government is in the hands of the prince; and this pre-eminence gives him ſo reſpectable a figure in the eyes of his ſubjects, and preſents him ſo conſtantly, and with ſuch luſtre of authority to their minds, that it is no wonder they are ſometimes diſpoſed to advance him from the rank of firſt magiſtrate of a free people, into that of ſupreme and ſole arbiter of the laws. But unleſs theſe prejudices are corrected by the knowledge of our conſtitutional hiſtory, there is conſtant reaſon to apprehend, not only that the royal authority may ſtretch itſelf beyond due bounds; but may grow at length into that enormous tyranny, from which this nation has been at other times ſo happily, and now about half a century paſt, ſo wonderfully redeemed by the abdication of James II.

It is very notorious from the common diſcourſe of men on this occaſion, that very many of us have but crude notions of the form of government, under which we live, and which has been tranſmitted to us from our forefathers. They allow, indeed, that ſomething was to be done in the perilous circumſtances into which we had fallen. But

when

when they come to explain themſelves, it is in a way that leaves us no right to do any thing; at leaſt, not what it was found expedient for the nation to do at that juncture. For they contend, that the crown of England is abſolute; that the form of government is an intire and ſimple monarchy; and that ſo it has continued to be in every period of it down to the Abdication: that the Conqueſt, at leaſt, to aſcend no higher, inveſted the firſt William in abſolute dominion; that from him it devolved of courſe upon his ſucceſſors; and that all the pretended rights of the people, the great charters of ancient and modern date, were mere uſurpations on the prince, extorted from him by the neceſſity of his affairs, and revocable at his pleaſure: nay, they inſinuate that parliaments themſelves were the creatures of his will; that their privileges were all derived from the ſovereign's grant; and that they made no part in the original frame and texture of the Engliſh government.

In ſupport of this extraordinary ſyſtem, they refer us to the conſtant tenor of our hiſtory. They ſpeak of the Conqueror, as proprietary of the whole kingdom; which accordingly, they ſay, he parcelled out, as he ſaw fit, in grants to his Norman and Engliſh ſubjects:

ſubjects: that, through his partial conſideration of the church, and an exceſſive liberality to his favoured ſervants, this diſtribution was ſo ill made as to give occaſion to all the broils and contentions that followed: that the churchmen began their unnatural claim of independency on the crown; in which attempt they were ſoon followed by the encroaching and too powerful barons: that in theſe ſtruggles many flowers of the crown were rudely torn from it, till a ſort of truce was made, and the rebellious humour ſomewhat compoſed by the extorted articles of Running-Mede: that, theſe confuſions, however, were afterwards renewed, and even increaſed by the conteſts of the two houſes of York and Lancaſter: but that upon the union of the roſes in the perſon of Henry VII. theſe commotions were finally appeaſed, and the crown reſtored to its ancient dignity and luſtre: that, indeed, the uſage of parliaments, with ſome other forms of popular adminiſtration, which had been permitted in the former irregular reigns, was continued, but of the mere grace of the prince, and without any conſequence to his prerogative: that, ſucceeding kings, and even Henry himſelf, conſidered themſelves as poſſeſſed of an imperial crown; and that, tho' they might ſometimes

times condeſcend to take the advice, they were abſolutely above the controul of the people: in ſhort, that the law itſelf was but the will of the prince declared in parliament; or rather ſolemnly received and atteſted there, for the better information and more intire obedience of the ſubject.

This they deliver as a juſt and fair account of the Engliſh government; the genius of which, they ſay, is abſolute and monarchical in the higheſt degree. They aſk, what reſtraint our Henry VIII. and our admired Elizabeth would ever ſuffer to be put on their prerogative, and how the fancy came of dating the high pretenſions of the crown from the acceſſion of the Stuart family. They affirm, that James I. and his ſon, aimed only to continue the government on the footing on which they had received it; that their notions of it were authorized by conſtant fact; by the evidence of our hiſtories; by the language of parliaments; by the concurrent ſenſe of every order of men amongſt us; and, that what followed in the middle of the laſt century was the mere effect of popular, as many former diſorders had been of patrician violence. In a word, they conclude with ſaying, that the old government revived again at the reſtoration, juſt as, in like circumſtances, it had

had done before, at the union of the two houſes: that, in truth, the deſertion of James II. had given a colour to the ſubſequent innovations; but that, till the new ſettlement was made, the Engliſh conſtitution, as implying ſomething different from pure monarchy, was an unintelligible notion, or rather a mere whim that had not the leaſt foundation in truth or hiſtory.

This is a ſummary of the doctrines, which are ſtill but too current amongſt us. But there is reaſon to apprehend much miſchief from the prevalence and propagation of ſuch a ſyſtem; a ſyſtem, which, as being, in the language of the patrons of it, founded upon fact, is the more likely to impoſe upon the people; and, as referring to the practice of ancient times, is not for every man's confutation. But let us examine in regard to this prerogative-ſyſtem, and its contrary, whether there is any ground in hiſtory to conclude that the prince has a conſtitutional claim to abſolute uncontroulable dominion; or, whether the liberty of the ſubject be not eſſential to every different form, under which the Engliſh government has appeared.

The principles of the Saxon policy, and in ſome reſpects the form of it, have been conſtantly kept up in every ſucceeding period of the

the Engliſh monarchy. The ſpirit of liberty was predominant in thoſe times, and for proof of it one ſingle remarkable circumſtance may be ſufficient. Our Saxon anceſtors conceived ſo little of government, by the will of the magiſtrate, without fixed laws, that Laga, or Leaga, which in their language firſt and properly ſignified the ſame as law with us, was transferred very naturally (for language always conforms itſelf to the genius, temper, and manners of a nation) to ſignify a country, diſtrict or province; theſe good people having no notion of any inhabited country not governed by laws. Thus Dæna-Laga; Mercena-Laga; and Weſtſexena-Laga, were not only uſed in their laws and hiſtory to ſignify the laws of the Danes, Mercians and Weſt-Saxons, but the countries likewiſe: of this uſage many inſtances might be produced. It then plainly appears, how fully the ſpirit of liberty poſſeſſed the very language of our Saxon forefathers. And it might well do ſo; for it was of the eſſence of the German conſtitutions; a juſt notion of which (ſo uniform was the genius of the brave people that planned them) may be gathered from what the Roman hiſtorians, and, above all, from what Tacitus has recorded of them.

The

The defenders of regal power, conſcious to themſelves of the teſtimony which the Saxon times are ready to bear againſt them, are wiſe enough to lay the foundation of their ſyſtem in the Conqueſt. They look no higher than that event for the origin of the conſtitution, and think they have a notable advantage in deducing their notion of the Engliſh government from the form it took in the hands of the Norman invader. But is it not pleaſant to hear theſe men calumniate the improvements that have been made from time to time in the plan of our civil conſtitution with the name of uſurpations, when they are not aſhamed to erect the conſtitution itſelf on what they muſt eſteem, at leaſt, a great and manifeſt uſurpation?

Allowing them to dignify the Norman ſettlement with the title of Conſtitution; what follows? That deſpotiſm was of the eſſence of that conſtitution: ſo they tell us indeed; but without one word of proof for the aſſertion. Do they think the name of Conqueſt, or even the Thing, implies an abſolute unlimited dominion? Have they forgot that William's claim to the crown was not conqueſt (tho' it enabled him to ſupport his claim) but teſtamentary ſucceſſion? A title very much in the taſte of that time, and extremely reverenced

renced by our Saxon anceſtors. That he even renounced his conqueſt by his coronation-oath; that the legiſlative power continued the ſame in his hands, as in thoſe of his predeceſſors; and that, in one word, he confirmed the Saxon laws, at leaſt before he had been many years in poſſeſſion of his new dignity.

Is there any thing in all this that favours the notion of his erecting himſelf into an abſolute lord of the conquered country? Is it not certain, even from his own Magna Charta, as we may call it, that he bound himſelf to govern according to law; that he could neither touch the honours nor eſtates of his ſubjects but by legal trial; and that even the many forfeitures in his reign are an evidence of his proceeding in that method?

Still we are told of his parcelling out the whole land, upon his own terms, to his followers, and of his famous inſtitution of feudal tenures. But what if the former of theſe aſſertions be foreign to the purpoſe at leaſt, if not falſe; and the latter, ſubverſive of the very ſyſtem it is brought to eſtabliſh. The fact has been much diſputed of his parcelling out moſt, or all, of the lands of England to his followers. But ſuppoſing, that the property of all the ſoil in the kingdom had changed hands; what is that to us, who claim

claim under our Norman, as well as Saxon anceſtors? The Saxons might be injured, oppreſſed, enſlaved; and yet the Conſtitution, tranſmitted to us through the Normans, be perfectly free. But he inſtituted, they ſay, the feudal law. True. But the feudal law, and abſolute dominion, are two things; and, what is more, perfectly incompatible.

Throughout the Norman and Plantagenet lines, there was one perpetual conteſt between the prince and his feudataries for law and liberty; an evident proof of the light in which our forefathers regarded the Norman conſtitution. In the competition of the two roſes, and perhaps before, they loſt ſight indeed of this prize. But no ſooner was the public tranquillity reſtored, and the contending claims united in Henry VII. than the old ſpirit revived: a legal conſtitution became the conſtant object of the people, and tho' not always avowed, was, in effect, as conſtantly ſubmitted to by the ſovereign. It may be true, perhaps, that the ability of Henry VII. the impetuous carriage of Henry VIII. and the generous intrigues of queen Elizabeth; but above all, the condition of the times and a ſenſe of former miſeries, kept down the ſpirit of liberty for ſome reigns, or diminiſhed, at leaſt the force and vigour of its operations.

But

But a paſſive ſubjection was never acknowledged, certainly never demanded as matter of right, 'till queen Elizabeth now and then, and king James, by talking continually in this ſtrain, awakened the national jealouſy; which proved ſo uneaſy to himſelf, and in the end, ſo fatal to his family. Whence, it may evidently appear, that, unleſs the ſyſtem of liberty is connected with that of prerogative in our notion of the Engliſh government, the tenor of our hiſtory is perfectly unintelligible, and that no conſiſtent account can be given of it, but on the ſuppoſition of a legal limited conſtitution.

The fault, if there was one, lay in the original plan of the conſtitution itſelf, as is clearly ſeen by conſidering the genius, views, and conſequences of the feudal policy. It muſt, however, be affirmed that this policy was founded in the principles of freedom, and was, in truth, excellently adapted to an active, fierce and military people; ſuch as were all thoſe to whom theſe weſtern parts of Europe have been indebted for their civil conſtitutions. But between the burdenſome ſervices impoſed on the ſubject by this tenure, or which it gave at leaſt the pretence of exacting from him, and the too great reſtraint which an unequal and diſproportioned allot-

ment of feuds, to the greater barons, laid on the ſovereign; but, above all, by narrowing the plan of liberty too much, and, while it ſeemed to provide for the dependency of the prince on one part of his ſubjects, by leaving both him and them in a condition to exerciſe an arbitrary dominion over all others; hence it came to paſs that the feudal policy naturally produced ſtruggles and convulſions, till it was ſeen in the end to be altogether unſuited to the circumſtances of a rich, civilized, and commercial people. The event was, that the inconveniencies, perceived in this form of government, gradually made way for the introduction of a better; which was not, however, ſo properly a new form, as the old one amended and ſet right, cleared of its miſchiefs and inconſiſtencies, but conducted on the ſame principles as the former, and purſuing the ſame end, tho' by different methods.

It is not to be denied, perhaps, that in the heat of former conteſts, the barons ſometimes carried their pretenſions too far, and laboured in their turn to uſurp on the crown, in revenge for the oppreſſions they had felt from it. However, their firſt contentions were only for a mitigation of the feudal ſyſtem. It was not the character of the Norman

princes

princes to come eaſily into any project that was likely, in the leaſt degree, to intrench on their powers. Yet the grievances complained of, were in part removed, in part moderated by Henry I. and many other ſucceſſive charters. Tho' the laſt blow was not given to theſe feudal ſervitudes, till after the Reſtoration, when ſuch of them as remained and were found prejudicial to the liberty of the ſubject, were finally aboliſhed.

It will not be amiſs to remember that in the old feudal policy, the king's barons, that is, ſuch as held *in capite* of the crown by knight's ſervice, were the king's, or rather the kingdom's, great council. No laws could be enacted without their conſent. It appears, that towards the end of the Conqueror's reign, the number of theſe tenants in chief was about 700; who, as the whole property of the kingdom was, in effect, in their power, may be thought a no unfit repreſentative of the nation. It was ſo, perhaps, in thoſe rude and warlike times, when the ſtrength of the nation lay entirely in the ſoldiery; that is, in thoſe who held by knight-ſervice, either immediately of the crown, or of the meſne-lords. For the remainder of the people, whom they call tenants in ſocage, were of ſmall account; being conſidered only

in the light of ſervants, and contributing no otherwiſe to the national ſupport than by their cultivation of the ſoil, which left their maſters at leiſure to attend with leſs diſtraction on their military ſervices. However, a policy, that excluded ſuch numbers from the rank and privileges of citizens, was ſo far a defective one. And this defect would become more ſenſible every day, in proportion to the growth of arts, the augmentation of commerce, and the ſecurity the nation found itſelf in from foreign dangers. Hence aroſe an important change in the legiſlature of the kingdom, which was much enlarged beyond its former limits. But this was done gradually; and was more properly an extenſion, than violation of the ancient ſyſtem.

The number of tenants in chief, or the king's freeholders, was much increaſed by various cauſes, but chiefly by the alienation which the greater barons were permitted to make of their fees: the conſequence was, that the leſſer military tenants *in capite* multiplied exceedingly; and, as many of them were poor and unequal to a perſonal attendance in the court of their lord, or the common council of the kingdom (where of right and duty they were to pay their attendance) they were willing, and it was found convenient

nient to give them leave, to appear in the way of repreſentation. And this was the origin of what we now call the knights of the ſhires; who, in thoſe times, were appointed to repreſent, not all the freeholders of counties, but the leſſer tenants of the crown only: for theſe, not attending in perſon, would otherwiſe have had no place in the king's council.

The riſe of citizens and burgeſſes, that is, repreſentatives of the cities and trading towns, muſt be accounted for ſomewhat differently. When the military genius of the nation declined, and inſtead of a people of ſoldiers, the commercial ſpirit prevailed, and filled our towns with rich traders and merchants, it was no longer reaſonable, nor was it the intereſt of the crown, that theſe communities and bodies of men ſhould be ſo little regarded. On the contrary, a large ſhare of the public burdens being laid upon them, and the frequent neceſſities of the crown, eſpecially in foreign wars, or in the king's contentions with his barons, requiring him to have recourſe to their purſes, it was naturally brought about that thoſe, as well as the tenants *in capite*, ſhould be admitted to have a ſhare in the public counſels. The great towns and cities, that before were royal demeſnes, part of the

king's private patrimony, and talliable by him at pleaſure, were therefore allowed to appear in his council by their deputies, to treat with him of the proportion of taxes to be raiſed on them, and in a word, to be conſidered in the ſame light as the other members of that great aſſembly. When this great alteration was firſt made is not ſo neceſſary here to enquire into; we find it ſubſiſting at leaſt under Edward III. and from that time there is no diſpute but that the legiſlature, which was originally compoſed of the ſovereign and his feudal tenants, included alſo the repreſentatives of the counties, and of the royal towns and cities. To ſpeak in our modern ſtyle, the Houſe of Commons was now formed; and, by this addition, the glorious edifice of Engliſh liberty compleated.

Therefore the conſtitution of England, as laid in the feudal tenures, was eſſentially free, and the very changes it has undergone, were the natural and almoſt unavoidable effects of thoſe tenures; ſo that what the adverſaries of liberty object, as uſurpations on the regal prerogative, are now ſeen to be either the proper reſult of the feudal eſtabliſhment, or the moſt juſt and neceſſary amendments of it. Hence, the notion of an abſolute, deſpotic government amongſt us, is intirely diſcredited;

and

and we may, perhaps, apply to the Engliſh government what naturaliſts obſerve of the human body; that, when it arrives at its full growth, it does not perhaps retain a ſingle particle of the matter it originally ſet out with, yet the alteration has been made ſo gradually and imperceptibly, that the ſyſtem is accounted the ſame under all changes. We ſeem to have ſhaken off the conſtituent parts of the feudal conſtitution; but, liberty having been always the informing principle, time and experience have rather compleated the old ſyſtem than created a new one; and we account the preſent and Norman eſtabliſhment all one, by the ſame rule as we ſay that Hercules, when he became the deliverer of oppreſſed nations, was ſtill the ſame with him who had ſtrangled ſerpents in his cradle.

There is but one objection of any weight that can be oppoſed to this concluſion. It is, "That, notwithſtanding the clear evidence produced, both for the free nature of the Engliſh conſtitution, and the general ſenſe of the Engliſh nation concerning it, yet, in fact, the government was very deſpotic under the Tudor, and ſtill more perhaps under the firſt princes of the Stuart line. How could this happen on the plan which ſuppoſes the popular intereſt to have been kept up in conſtant vi-

gour, or rather to have been always gaining, insensibly indeed but necessarily, on the power of the crown? Will not the partizans of king James II. and his family, have reason to alledge in their behalf, that their notions of the prerogative were but such as they succeeded to with the crown; and, whatever may be pretended from researches into remoter times, that they endeavoured only to maintain the monarchy on the footing on which it had stood for many successions, and on which it then stood when the administration fell into their hands?

To clear up this important matter, it will be very necessary to observe, that whether we consider the characters of the persons, or the circumstances of the times, every thing concurred to exalt the princes of the house of Tudor to a height of power and prerogative, which had hitherto been unknown in England, and became, in the end, so dangerous to the constitution itself.

A long and bloody war, that had well nigh exhausted the strength and vitals of this country, was, at length, composed by the fortunate successes of Bosworth-field. All men were desirous to breathe a little from the rage of civil wars; and the enormous tyranny of the prince, whose death had made way for the

the exaltation of the earl of Richmond, was a ſort of foil to the new government, and made the rigours of it appear but moderate when ſet againſt the cruelties of the preceding reign.

Henry VII. was wiſe and provident; jealous of his authority as well as title; and fruitful in expedients to ſecure both. There was little danger of any ſucceſsful oppoſition to the crown, if the nation had been ever ſo ill inclined towards it. The great lords, or barons, were in former days, both by the feudal conſtitution, and by the vaſt property they had in their hands, the proper and only check on the ſovereign. Theſe had been either cut off, or ſo far weakened at leaſt by the preceding civil wars, that the danger ſeemed intirely over from that quarter. The politic king was aware of this advantage, and improved it to admiration. One may even affirm, that this was the ſole object of his government. For the greater ſecurity and majeſty of his perſon, he began with the inſtitution of his life-guard; and having thus ſet out with enlarging his own train, his next care was to diminiſh that of his nobles. Hence, the laws againſt Retainers, which he conſtantly put in execution with a jealous ſeverity. It was alſo with a view to this depreſ-

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ſion of the nobility, that the court of Star-Chamber was conſidered ſo much, and confirmed by act of parliament in his reign. What was principally aimed at by it, as his hiſtorian frankly owns, was force, and the two chief ſupports of force, combination of multitudes, and maintenance or headſhip of great perſons. To put them ſtill lower in the public eſtimation, he affected to fill the great offices with churchmen only: and it was, perhaps, as much to awe the nation by the terror of his prerogative as to fill his coffers, that he executed the penal laws with ſo mercileſs a rigour on the very greateſt of his ſubjects. Still further, to prevent the poſſibility of a return, in any future period of the patrician power, this politic prince provided with great care for the encouragement of trade, and the diſtribution of property; both which ends were effected at once by that famous act, which was made to ſecure and facilitate the alienation of eſtates by fine and proclamation. All theſe meaſures, we ſee, were evidently taken by the king to diminiſh the credit and ſuppreſs the influence of his nobles; and of conſequence, as he thought, to exalt the power of the crown above controul, if not in his own, yet in ſucceeding ages. And his policy had this effect for ſome time;

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tho' in the end it proved to advance another and more formidable power, at that time little ſuſpected or even thought of, the power of the people.

His ſon had little elſe left him to do, but to keep the nobles down in that weak and diſabled ſtate, to which his father had reduced them. There was, beſides, another circumſtance of great moment attending his government: he was the firſt heir of the white and red roſes; ſo that there was now an end of all diſpute and diſaffection in the people. With theſe advantages of ſituation, Henry VIII. brought with him to the throne a ſpirit of that firm and ſteady temper as was exactly fitted to break the edge of any riſing oppoſition. Beſides the confidence of youth, he was of a nature ſo elate and imperious, ſo reſolved and fearleſs, that no reſiſtance could ſucceed, hardly any thought of it could be entertained againſt him. The commons, who had hitherto been unuſed to treat with their kings but by the mediation of the great lords, being now puſhed into the preſence, were half diſcountenanced in the eye of majeſty; and durſt ſcarcely look up to the throne, much leſs diſpute the prerogatives with which ſo awful a prince was thought to be inveſted. And when the glaring abuſe of his power, as

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in the exaltation of that great inſtrument of his tyranny, Wolſey, ſeemed afterwards to provoke the people to ſome more vigorous reſolutions, a ſingle event happened which not only preſerved his greatneſs, but brought a further increaſe to it. This was the famous rupture with the court of Rome: nor was this all. The throne did not only ſtand by itſelf, as having no longer a dependence on the papal chair: it roſe ſtill higher, and was, in effect, erected upon it. For the eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction was not annihilated, but transferred; and all the powers of the Roman pontiff now centered in the king's perſon. Henceforth then we are to regard him in a more awful point of view, as armed with both ſwords at once. In fine, every thing contributed in him to the advancement of the regal power.

Thus matters, in a good degree, continued till the acceſſion of queen Elizabeth. It is true, the weak adminiſtration of a minor king, and a diſputed title at his death, occaſioned ſome diſorders; but the majeſty of the crown itſelf was little impaired by theſe buſtles; and it even acquired freſh glory on the head of that renowned princeſs, who, with the united qualifications of her father and grandfather,

father, ſurpaſſed them both in the arts of a winning and gracious popularity.

From this brief hiſtory of the Regal Authority exerciſed by the houſe of Tudor, and the means by which it arrived at ſo unuſual a greatneſs, it is no wonder that the Stuart family were ſomewhat dazzled by the height to which they were raiſed, and that more than half a century was required to correct, if ever it did correct, the high but falſe notions they had entertained of the imperial dignity. A power, which had domineered for ſo long a time, and that by the full allowance of parliament and people, was in their opinion, both in fact and right, abſolute and uncontroulable. It is certain, the Stuart family did draw that concluſion; but a great deal too haſtily, becauſe the exerciſe of this extraordinary power was committed, or more properly indulged to them by the people. This is ſo ſtrictly true, that from the firſt to the laſt of the Tudor line, imperious and deſpotic as they were of their own nature, no ſtretch of power was ventured upon by any of them, but under the countenance and protection of an act of parliament; and the parliaments, by taking care to make every addition to the crown their own proper act, left their kings no pretence to conſider themſelves

ſelves as abſolute and independent. There is a wide difference between the crown's uſurping this ſtrange power, and the parliament's beſtowing it. The forms of liberty were ſtill kept up through the intire reigns of the houſe of Tudor, and the conſtitution maintained, even amidſt the advantages of all ſorts which offered for the deſtruction of both. The parliament indeed was obſequious, was ſervile, was directed to favour their prince's intereſt or caprice by abſurd and inconſiſtent compliances, as was frequently the caſe when Henry VIII's paſſions ſwayed him; but they drew this benefit at leaſt to themſelves, that their power by that means would appear the greater and more unqueſtionable. The king in the mean time found himſelf at his eaſe; perhaps believed himſelf abſolute, and conſidered his application to parliaments as an act of mere grace and popular condeſcenſion. At leaſt after ſo long experience of their ſubmiſſion, the elder James certainly thought himſelf at liberty to entertain this belief of them. But he was the firſt of our princes that durſt avow this belief plainly and openly. He was ſtimulated, no doubt, to this uſurpation of power in England by the memory of his former ſubjection, or ſervitude rather, to the imperious church of Scotland. But this

was not all. Succeeding to ſo fair a patrimony as that of a mighty kingdom, and bringing, beſides, with him to the ſucceſſion, an undiſputed title and the additional ſplendor of another crown; all theſe advantages meeting in his perſon at that point of time, he ventured to give way to his natural love of dominion, and told the people to their face that the pretended rights of their parliaments were but the free gifts and graces of their kings; that every high point of government, that is, every point which he choſe to call by that name, was wrapt up in the awful myſtery of his prerogative; and, in a word, that "it † was ſedition for them to diſpute what a king may do in the height of his power."

Such was the language, the public language to his parliaments, of James I. but theſe pretences, which might have been ſuffered, or could not have been oppoſed under the Tudor line, were unluckily out of ſeaſon, and would not paſs on a people who knew their own rights, had ſaved to themſelves the exerciſe of them, and came now at length to feel and underſtand their importance. For, as before obſerved, the principal cauſe that had lifted the crown ſo high, was the depreſ-

† Speech to the Lords and Commons at Whitehall, An. 1609.

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ſion of the barons. But the commons were riſing apace, and in a century had grown to that height, that on the acceſſion of the houſe of Stuart, the point of time when the new king dreamed of nothing but abſolute ſovereignty, they were now in a condition to aſſert the public liberty, and, as the event ſhewed but too ſoon, to ſnatch the ſceptre itſelf out of the king's hands.

The tranſlation of the pope's ſupremacy to the king, was the circumſtance of all others which moſt favoured the ſudden growth of the imperial power in this nation, the prerogative having received numerous advantages from this newly acquired headſhip. It gave birth to that great and formidable court of the High-Commiſſion; and as all matters that regarded religion or conſcience, were ſubjected to its ſole cognizance and inſpection, it was preſently ſeen how wide an entrance it gave to the moſt tyrannical uſurpations. Fortunately for the advancement of prerogative there was already erected another court of the like dangerous nature, of ancient date, and venerable eſtimation, under the name of the court of Star-Chamber; which brought every thing under the direction of the crown that could not ſo properly be determined in the High-Commiſſion. Theſe were the two

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arms of abſolute dominion; which, at different times, and under different pretences, were ſtretched forth to the oppreſſion of every man that preſumed to oppoſe himſelf to the royal will or pleaſure. The Star-Chamber had been kept, in former times, within ſome tolerable bounds; but the high and arbitrary proceedings of the other court, which were conſtantly exerciſed and as conſtantly connived at by the parliament, gave an eaſy pretence for advancing the Star-Chamber's juriſdiction ſo far, that in the end its tyranny was equally intolerable as that of the High-Commiſſion, and both were totally aboliſhed.

Thus it was that the king's authority in all caſes, ſpiritual and temporal, was fully eſtabliſhed, and in the higheſt ſenſe of which the words are capable. Our kings themſelves ſo underſtood it, and when afterwards their parliaments ſhewed a diſpoſition to interfere in any thing relating either to church or ſtate, they were preſently reprimanded and ſternly required not to meddle with what concerned their prerogative-royal, and their high points of government. Inſtances of this ſort were very frequent in Elizabeth's reign, when the commons were getting up, and the ſpirit of liberty began to exert itſelf in that aſſembly.

This, one would think, was ſufficient to ſatisfy the ambition of our kings; but they went further, and ſtill under the wing of their beloved ſupremacy. The parliament were not ſo tame, or the king's grace did not require it of them, to diveſt themſelves intirely, tho' it was much checked and reſtrained by theſe courts, of their legiſlative capacity; but the crown found a way to eaſe itſelf of this curb, if at any time it ſhould prove troubleſome to it. This was by means of the Diſpenſing Power, which in effect, vacated all laws at once, farther than it pleaſed the king to countenance and allow them. And for ſo enormous a ſtretch of power (which being rarely exerciſed was the leſs heeded) there was a ready pretence from the papal privileges and pre-eminencies to which the crown had ſucceeded. For this moſt invidious of all the claims of prerogative had been indiſputable in the church; and it had been nibbled at by ſome of our kings in former times, from the contagious authority of the pope's example, even without the pretence which the ſupremacy in ſpirituals now gave for it. The exerciſe of this power in the popes themſelves, was thought ſo monſtrous, that Matthew Paris honeſtly complains of it in his time, as extin-

extinguiſhing all juſtice—* *extinguit omnem juſtitiam.*

It is in this diſpenſing ſpirit that James I. having delivered it for a maxim of ſtate, "that the king is above law," goes on to affirm, in one of his favourite works, "that general laws made publickly in parliament, may, upon known reſpects to the king, by his authority be mitigated and *ſuſpended* upon cauſes only known to him †. But it is well known that the claiming and carrying too high this prerogative of the diſpenſing power by the princes of the houſe of Stuart, was what brought on the ruin of the laſt of them.

Another ſource of the regal dominion in later times, and ſtill ſpringing from out of the rock of ſupremacy (which followed and ſuccoured the court-prerogative wherever it went, juſt as the rock of Moſes, the Rabbins ſay, journeyed with the Jewiſh camp, and refreſhed it in all its ſtations) was the opinion taken up and propagated by churchmen, from the earlieſt æra of the reformation, concerning the irreſiſtible power of kings, and the Paſſive Obedience that is due to it.

* Hiſt. Ang. p. 694.

† *The true law of free Monarchies*, in the King's works, p. 203.

It cannot be doubted that the churchmen eſpecially, both by intereſt and principle, would be cloſely connected with the new head of the church. Their former ſubjection in ſpirituals to the papal authority would of itſelf create a prejudice in favour of it, as now reſiding in the king's perſon; and, the diſpoſal of biſhopricks and other great preferments being now intirely in the crown, they would of courſe be much addicted to his ſervice.

What ſhall we alſo ſay of the perniciou ſyſtem of the Divine Infeaſible Right of king which unhappily aroſe in like manner in th church of England, as another conſequenc of the king's ſupremacy. Henry the VIIIth uſurpation of the ſupremacy, as it was calle at Rome, appeared ſo prodigious a crime all good catholics, that no ſeverities were gre enough to inflict upon him for it; and, wh afterwards, in right of this aſſumed headſhi the crown went ſo far as to reject the authori of the church, as well as court of Rome, the thunders of the Vatican were employ againſt this invader of the church's prerog tive. The pope, in his extreme indignatio threatened to depoſe Edward. He put t threat in execution againſt Elizabeth. Y in ſpite of religious prejudices, this

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eſteemed ſo monſtrous a ſtretch of power, and ſo odious to all chriſtian princes, that the jeſuits thought it expedient, by all means, to ſoften the appearance of it. One of their contrivances was, by ſearching into the origin of civil power, which they brought rightly, tho' for this wicked purpoſe, from the people. For they concluded, that, if the regal power could be ſhewn to have no divine right, but to be of human and even popular inſtitution, the liberty which the people took in depoſing kings, would be leſs invidious. Thus the jeſuits reaſoned on the matter. The argument was puſhed with great vigour by Harding and his brethren in Elizabeth's reign; but afterwards with more learning and addreſs by Bellarmine, Mariana, and others.

To combat this dangerous poſition, ſo prejudicial to the power of kings, and which was meant to juſtify all attempts of violence on the lives of heretical princes, the proteſtant divines went into the other extreme; and, to ſave the perſon of their ſovereign, preached up the doctrine of Divine Right. Yet, it could hardly have kept its ground againſt ſo much light and evidence as has been thrown at different times on this ſubject, but for an unlucky circumſtance attending the days of reformation. This was the growth of puritaniſm

niſm and the republican ſpirit; which, in order to juſtify its attack on the legal conſtitutional rights of the crown, adopted the very ſame principles with the jeſuited party: and, under theſe circumſtances, it is not to be thought ſtrange that a principle, true in the main, ſhould be generally condemned and execrated. The crown and church of England had reaſon to look upon both theſe ſorts of men as their mortal enemies. What wonder then they ſhould unite in reprobating the political tenets on which their common enmity was juſtified and ſupported! So that it appears true, and a charge not to be denied, 'That the deſpotiſm affected by the princes of the houſe of Stuart, has been owing in a great meaſure to the ſlaviſh doctrines of the clergy of the church of England.' Liberty, religious and civil, at laſt prevailed over theſe impotent attempts; and the unhappy king Charles I. could not prevent his miniſters firſt, and afterwards the conſtitution itſelf, from falling a victim to that fury, which, in the end, forced off his own head.

Such was the iſſue of the deſperate conflict between prerogative and liberty. The wonder was, that this fatal experience ſhould not have rectified all miſtakes, and have ſettled the government on a ſure and laſting baſis at

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the reſtoration. The people were convinced, that nothing was more requiſite to their happineſs, than the ſecure poſſeſſion of thei ancient legal conſtitution. The recalled family were not ſo wiſe; and in their attempts to revive thoſe old exploded claims, which had ſucceeded ſo ill with their predeceſſors, they once more fell from the throne, and made room for the Revolution to pluck up all the noxious weeds of uſurped power and rectify the errors of government.

Our new MAGNA CHARTA, or DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, ſettled, authenticated, and obtained by the Revolution, is a ſufficient barrier againſt any future encroachments of the crown; and from hence we may date the trueſt æra of Engliſh liberty. It was interwoven indeed with the very principles of the conſtitution. It was incloſed in the ancient trunk of the feudal law, and was propagated from it. But its operation was weak and partial in that ſtate of its infancy. It acquired freſh force and vigour with age, and has now at length extended its influence to every part of the political ſyſtem.

William III. upon theſe principles, and partly in right of his conſort Mary, eldeſt daughter of king James II. and partly by election, ſucceeded in 1689. The Engliſh

conſtitution being now formed and eſtabliſhed upon the good foundation of freedom, juſtice, and ſafety, there was reaſon to hope by all ſincere wiſhers to the welfare of their country, that it would ſubſiſt, if duly maintained in purity and vigour. But vice and folly found means to do too much towards defeating the purpoſes of the beſt government. Here there could be no fault in the plan, but there were great miſcarriages, if not ſomething worſe, in the execution of it. Wicked Miniſters and Favourites, tho' none conſidered in the light of all-graſping potentates, had alſo the aſcendant in this reign by the prevalency of the moſt pernicious councils. Hatred againſt the abdicated king and his adherents, was a ſpecious pretext for covering the moſt villainous deſigns; and none ever thought themſelves ſufficiently rewarded for the ſervices they had rendered the new king in this reſpect. The conſtant advice of his pretended friends and miniſters to him was, "Borrow what you can; the more you borrow the more friends you make; intereſt is a ſtronger tie than principle." Hereupon, in the acts of parliament then paſſed, there were clauſes, empowering the king to anticipate and borrow money on his revenues, which was the beginning of the funds ſo de-

deſtructive to the nation. The money thus lent to the public, as it is pretended in their great extremity, was ſqueezed out of the very bowels of the ſubject, who now pays intereſt for it, without receiving the leaſt benefit or advantage in return. How this could be ſo concerted, is in itſelf amazing, but will be no difficult matter to conceive, if we conſider, that clerks, agents, brokers, money-ſcriveners, commiſſaries, Jews, miniſters and members of parliament, were allowed 30 or 40 per cent. for pretending to advance the public the very money they had already received, or juſt robbed them of. In thoſe times it was uſual to contract with the public to perform a certain ſervice, ſuppoſe for thirty thouſand pounds, one third down, and the reſt payable at two different terms. The contracter, after receiving his ten thouſand pounds down, either ſold his contract to great advantage, or perhaps performed the whole ſervice on credit. When the remaining payments became due, he, by another fund, advanced to the public at 30 per cent. premium, the very money it had paid him a few months before. Thus, without being one ſhilling out of pocket, he contrived to make the public 10, or 15,000 l. in debt to him. Things were contracted and paid for, that

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were never furniſhed: falſe muſters were winked at by ſea and land; every one aimed at his ſhare of the plunder: no man pretended to check another, and eſtabliſh a precedent that might make againſt himſelf. The maxim was to live and let live; and the nation, like a town taken by ſtorm, was given up to plunder. It was at this time that the word Perquiſite grew into vogue. Thoſe, who did the real ſervice, were forced to be content with their wages; but ſecretaries, paymaſters, clerks, and the like, muſt have, and had their Perquiſites.—The firſt proprietors then, of that ſhare of the profits of the induſtrious, undeſervedly called Public Debt, were ſuch vermin as from nothing took advantage of the public folly; and by furniſhing them their own money at an extravagant premium, got annuities aſſigned them for it at ſeven per cent intereſt. Theſe harpies underſtood their trade too well to ſpare ready money to thoſe who had done real ſervice. Inſtead of money, all ſuch were obliged to receive debentures, which their neceſſities forced them to part with to uſurers at 50 or 60 per cent. diſcount. As ſoon as they found themſelves poſſeſſed of theſe, they claimed all the merit and compaſſion due to the unhappy old ſoldiers, ſailors, and other wretches they had ſtarved out of them:

them: and, inſtead of money, of which they knew they had left none unſqueezed out of the preſent generation, they were ſo very obliging as to content themſelves with having poſterity delivered over to them in ſecurity for ſeven per cent. intereſt, to be paid, 'till the principal, which they never advanced, ſhould be refunded. After the peace of Ryſwick, thoſe gentlemen got too high, and the people of England too low, to admit of inquiries. Public Credit grew a cant word; and the law being debarred from enquiring into their titles, their ſecurities were preferred to land, and found real purchaſers, who actually paid a new premium for what had coſt the ſellers little or nothing.

One cannot help obſerving, that if king William had ſucceeded in his ſcheme, had made an intire conqueſt of France, and had given up every moveable thing in it to indemnify the people of England, rich as that country then was, it would not have been ſufficient to have paid our expences; nor would France, after ſuch devaſtation, have fared ſo ill as England has done. Had the people of England ſtripped themſelves to the ſkin, and given even to the bricks of their houſes, in ſatisfaction to the uſurers, theſe laſt would not have got half ſo much, nor

would the people have ſuffered what they have done, by the mortgage they actually made over of their own induſtry, and that of their poſterity, to the moſt worthleſs of mankind.

Beſides theſe, there were other reaſons which might well make the nation in general diſſatisfied with their condition. The king's aboliſhing epiſcopacy in Scotland, and ſetting up preſbytery there, gave the clergy ſome jealouſy of his averſion to the church of England: the Engliſh were overlooked, and the Dutch the chief perſons that were favoured and truſted, as appeared by the inquiries into the forfeited eſtates in Ireland; and biſhop Burnet obſerves, that "few were preferred but whigs, except they purchaſed their places; for the whigs ſet every thing to ſale." And, he alſo relates, that having complained himſelf to king William of the practice of the court in bribing and corrupting the members of parliament; the king anſwered, "He hated it as much as any man, but ſaw it was not poſſible to avoid it, conſidering the corruption of the age, unleſs he would endanger the whole." However, it may be ſaid, that it was the tories that then ſaved the ſtate from deſtruction, by forcing the king to aſſent to the important triennial act. They had changed

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ſides or rather principles with the whigs, and became in their turns, the aſſertors of freedom and uſeful meaſures.

Anne, the only ſurviving daughter of king James II. by the lady Anne Hyde, ſucceeded in 1702. This reign would have ſtood with greater glory than any other in the annals of our hiſtory, were it not ſullied by the peace of Utrecht, whereby it forfeited its title to that importance this nation would otherwiſe have ever ſince borne from it in Europe.

The whigs, who had the principal ſhare in the Revolution, had preſerved their ſuperiority for a good part of queen Anne's reign; and the duke of Marlborough, ſolicitous after his own aggrandizement, had deſerted the tories to embrace the party of the whigs. Of this party was the earl of Godolphin, lord high treaſurer of England. Ties of intereſt, and of marriage, had cloſely connected him with Marlborough. One commanded the army with great reputation as a general, witneſs his ſeveral and ſignal victories gained over the French in the war that took up a great ſhare of this reign; and the other had as high a character in the adminiſtration of the revenue, being the only of our Prime Miniſters, who may be ſaid to have acted worthily in that ſtation. Biſhop Burnet gives this

this account of him under the reign of king Charles II. that he was the ſilenteſt and modeſteſt man, who was perhaps ever bred in a court. He had a clear apprehenſion, and diſpatched buſineſs with great method, and with ſo much temper, that he had no perſonal enemies. But his ſilence begot a jealouſy, which hung long upon him. His notions were for the court; but his incorrupt and ſincere way of managing the concerns of the treaſury created in all people a very high eſteem for him. He had true principles of religion and virtue, and never heaped up wealth. So that, all things being laid together, he was one of the worthieſt and wiſeſt men who was employed in that age. And in another place, the ſame hiſtorian obſerves, that he was a man of the cleareſt head, the calmeſt temper, and the moſt incorrupt of all the miniſters he had ever known; and that after having been thirty years in the treaſury, and during nine of thoſe lord treaſurer, as he was never once ſuſpected of corruption, or of ſuffering his ſervants to grow rich under him, ſo in all that time his eſtate was not increaſed by him to the value of four thouſand pounds. Boyer tells us, that he had a penetrating contemplative genius, a ſlow but unnerring apprehenſion, and an exquiſite judgment, with

few

few words, tho' always to the purpoſe. His ſuperior wiſdom and ſpirit made him deſpiſe the low arts of vain-glorious courtiers; for he never kept ſuitors unprofitably in ſuſpence, nor promiſed any thing, that he was not reſolved to perform; but as he accounted diſſimulation the worſt of lying, ſo on the other hand his denials were ſoftened by the frankneſs and condeſcenſion, with which he informed thoſe whom he could not gratify. His great abilities and conſummate experience qualified him for a Prime Miniſter; and his exact knowledge of all the branches of the revenue particularly fitted him for the management of the treaſury. He was thrifty without the leaſt tincture of avarice, being as good an œconomiſt of the public wealth, as he was of his private fortune. He had a clear conception of the whole government, both in church and ſtate; and perfectly knew the temper, genius, and diſpoſition of the Engliſh nation: and tho' his ſtern gravity appeared a little ungracious, yet his ſteady and impartial juſtice recommended him to the eſteem of almoſt every perſon; ſo that no man, in ſo many different public ſtations, and ſo great a variety of buſineſs, ever had more friends or fewer enemies.

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The lord treaſurer and the duke of Marlborough were ſo great a ſupport to each other, that it was difficult to attack them with any hopes of ſucceſs. The only way the tories could think of weakening their antagoniſts, was to deprive them of the confidence of the queen; and when they had done that, to prevail on her majeſty to diſſolve the parliament, in which the whigs had ſo great a majority, and to call a new one.

Some high-church preachers, among whom Dr. Sacheverell had the lead, either ſtirred up by others, or of their own accord, gave the firſt blow by their ſermons. They were charged, and particularly Sacheverell, who had preached before the queen at St. Paul's, with having attacked the late Revolution and the Act of Toleration; with having inſinuated that the church of England had been in great danger under the preceding reign; in ſhort, that her majeſty's adminiſtration, both in civil and eccleſiaſtical affairs, tended to ſubvert the conſtitution. Sacheverell had alſo ſaid, that there were falſe brethren among perſons in high character and employments in church and ſtate. A few propoſitions relating to paſſive obedience inflamed the minds of all thoſe who had ſuch doctrine in abhorrence. Sacheverell underwent a vigorous proſecution,

and after long debates in parliament, in the queen's preſence, he was ſentenced to a ſuſpenſion for three years, and his ſermons condemned to be burnt by the common hangman.

Tho' he had attacked queen Anne's right to the crown, and her adminiſtration, ſhe was not ſo much offended at his ſermons, as at the violence of the whigs, in condemning the oppoſite doctrine. She perceived in the ſpirit of the Stuart family, the danger to which ſhe had been hitherto expoſed, in ſharing her authority with people ever attentive to weaken, and even to aboliſh the prerogative of kings. The tories availed themſelves of this diſpoſition. She prorogued the parliament, and ſoon after made conſiderable alterations in the great offices of State. The earl of Sunderland, ſecretary of ſtate, ſon in law to Marlborough, and ſon to that Sunderland, who in the ſame employment had abuſed the confidence of king James II. was diſcarded, and his place given to the earl of Dartmouth. The directors of the bank, who were either whigs, or excited by that powerful party, repreſented to her majeſty that a change of miniſtry would affect the public credit, a thing ſo neceſſary in the preſent juncture; and ſome corporations were worked upon to addreſs the queen to the ſame purpoſe. The

alarm was not leſs violent, tho' perhaps more general and more ſincere in Holland.

The queen had at this time a particular confidence in one of her attendants, whoſe name was Mrs. Hill; ſhe was a relation of the ducheſs of Marlborough, who firſt introduced her to court. Mrs. Hill knew how to pleaſe her miſtreſs, and finding herſelf beloved, ſhe profited of the imprudence of her benefactreſs, who by her inſolent airs, her pride, her diſreſpect, and ingratitude towards the queen, loſt that favour of which ſhe had been ſo long in poſſeſſion. The ducheſs of Marlborough was diſgraced; her relation Mrs. Hill, inſtead of endeavouring to appeaſe the queen, applauded her juſt indignation, and directed by her friend Harley, ſhe ſet her miſtreſs againſt the huſband, as well as the wife.

Harley was a man of parts, who was thoroughly acquainted with the intereſts of his country, and with the genius of the people, was converſant in the laws and cuſtoms of the kingdom, and practiſed in the ſeveral artifices and intrigues by which parliaments are managed. He had been ſpeaker of the houſe of commons, and retained a vehement deſire of being revenged of Marlborough, who had been the cauſe of his being diſmiſſed from

from his poſt of ſecretary of ſtate. He was ſlave to no party. Sometimes whig, and ſometimes tory, he preferred whatever way was the eaſieſt to make his fortune. He imagined he ſhould find the right road, when he could ſteal himſelf into the good graces of the queen.

Mrs. Hill had beſides a private reaſon to be incenſed againſt the duke of Marlborough, for oppoſing the grant of a regiment to her brother, which the queen at her requeſt was inclined to; and, to complete the matter, Sunderland, at that time ſecretary of ſtate, endeavoured to prevail on the houſe of commons to addreſs her majeſty, that ſhe would be pleaſed to diſcharge that woman from about her perſon, then married to Mr. Maſham.

Harley had availed himſelf of theſe favourable circumſtances to exaſperate the queen, and by means of this Favourite to deſtroy thoſe who were the object of his reſentment. He bewailed with Mrs. Maſham the fate of that princeſs. "Such ingratitude, ſaid he, her majeſty had no reaſon to expect from people, whom ſhe had raiſed to the higheſt pitch of honours and preferments; nor could the beſt of ſovereigns believe that theſe ungrateful wretches, far from acknowledging

her favours, ſhould employ againſt her that very authority with which ſhe had inveſted them. One ſingle family, continued he, ſeems to domineer over England; they not only diſpoſe of all offices and employments, but even of the public funds. One man only is maſter of the army, of the fleet, and of the revenue, while the people groan under ſuch a load of taxes to maintain the troops and navy. The true patriots lament the fate of a queen whoſe perſonal qualities deſerve not only their reſpect, but their intire affection, which ſhe would certainly poſſeſs, if more jealous of her authority, ſhe ceaſed to lodge ſo great a part of it in the hands of a ſubject, ſucceſsful indeed in war, but more attentive to accumulate wealth by all ſorts of means, than ſolicitous about the real welfare of the ſtate." For, after all, it did not yet appear to the tories, what advantage England derived from thoſe victories of the duke of Marlborough, which were founded ſo high. Her trade was declining daily, her finances exhauſted, the public debts increaſing, ſo that very ſoon the people would not be able to pay the taxes. Yet they were as far as ever from ſeeing an end of this war, ſo unprofitable for the kingdom, ſo burdenſome to the public, and uſeful only to the general, who had it in his

his power to continue it, while he had any expectation of enriching himſelf, and while his credit was ſupported in England by a powerful party, whoſe chief aim was to cramp the authority of their kings.

Mrs. Maſham gave an account of this converſation to the queen, who reliſhed the ſentiments ſo well, that Harley was privately introduced to her majeſty. He ſoon acquired her confidence in ſome private conferences. Among other things he is ſaid to have told the queen, that Sacheverell's ſermons were the contrivance of the tories; that they had a double motive in ſetting him on this work, one to induce the whigs to make a public declaration of their ſentiments, ſo oppoſite to royal authority; the other to oblige Godolphin to give an account of his adminiſtration. This was the cauſe of Sacheverell's treating of Paſſive Obedience and of mal-adminiſtration. Godolphin imagined the only way to avert the inquiry, was to direct the attention of the parliament to ſome other object. 'Hence, ſaid Harley, ſuch noiſe and parade, to condemn an ignorant parſon, and to ſuppreſs thoſe ſorry diſcourſes, which would have been forgot the very moment after they had been delivered, if they had not attacked the adminiſtration.' 'Tis true, Go-

dolphin with all his abilities and prudence, loſt himſelf in the very courſe he had taken to avoid being ſhipwrecked: his ſtratagem turned to a bad account, for by the ſolemnity of Sacheverell's trial, the queen, who had been preſent at the debates, heard the violent declamations of the whigs againſt the Royal Prerogative; and Harley could add nothing ſtronger to render them obnoxious to her majeſty.

Purſuant to Harley's counſels, the queen took the ſtaff of lord-high-treaſurer of England from Godolphin, and appointed five lords commiſſioners of the treaſury, of whom Harley was one, and as they were all of his chuſing, he was very ſure that none of them would contradict him, and that he might from that time be deemed lord-treaſurer, as he was effectually ſhortly after, and beſides created earl of Oxford and Mortimer. The diſgrace of Sommers, preſident of the council, followed that of Godolphin. The earl of Rocheſter, the queen's uncle, had his place. Boyle, ſecretary of ſtate, and Sunderland's colleague, made a voluntary reſignation of his office, which was given to St. John, ſecretary at war, whoſe fine genius, lively wit, and acquired improvements, rendered him capable of filling the higheſt employments.

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He was not known then to have any immediate connection with Harley, but ſeemed rather to be of Marlborough's party, or depended only on the queen his miſtreſs, whoſe principal favourite he was. Other important changes ſoon followed, and at length a proclamation was iſſued for diſſolving the preſent parliament, and calling a new one.

Such violent attacks all at once againſt the whigs, were felt in Holland with the ſame ſenſibility as in England. People made no ſort of doubt at the Hague, but that the queen in changing her council would alſo change her meaſures. To continue Marlborough in the command of the army, was a point of dangerous conſequence to the tory party; but it was difficult to diſmiſs him. His reputation was too well eſtabliſhed. The only way to reduce him to the rank of a private ſubject, was to conclude a peace. The whigs ſtrenuouſly oppoſed this meaſure. One would have imagined that the Dutch had taken the negociations at Gertrudenberg into their hands, only with a view to defeat them; and that the Engliſh had precluded themſelves from all method of treating. Some ſafe way therefore was to be found, whereby the French king ſhould be ſecretly informed of the ſtate of England, and of the diſpoſition of the

queen and council; and this way was to be ſo private, that nobody ſhould be able to diſcover, or even in the leaſt to ſuſpect it. The negociation was ſo carried on for ſome time, and ſecretary Bolingbroke at laſt put himſelf in perſon the finiſhing hand to it in France. All know the diſtreſs the French were reduced to at this time. This ſeaſonable peace recovered their dejected ſpirits, and queen Anne did not long ſurvive it.

She was the laſt of the Stuart family that reigned in England, the temper and diſpoſition of which we beſt learn from lord Clarendon, particularly of the two Charles's and James II. "It was the unhappy fate and conſtitution of that family, ſays he, that they truſted naturally the judgments of thoſe, who were as much inferior to them in underſtanding as they were in quality, before their own, which was very good; and ſuffered even their natures, which diſpoſed them to virtue and juſtice, to be prevailed upon and altered and corrupted by thoſe, who knew how to make uſe of ſome one infirmity that they diſcovered in them; and by complying with that, and cheriſhing and ſerving it, they by degrees wrought upon the maſs, and ſacrificed all the other good inclinations to that ſingle vice. They were too much inclined to like men at

firſt ſight, and did not love the converſation of men of many more years than themſelves, and thought age not only troubleſome but impertinent. They did not love to deny, and leſs to ſtrangers than to their friends; not out of bounty or generoſity, which was a flower that did never grow naturally in the heart of either of the families, that of Stuart or the other of Bourbon, but out of an unſkilfulneſs and defect in the countenance: and, when they prevailed upon themſelves to make ſome pauſe rather than deny, importunity removed all reſolution, which they knew neither how to ſhut out nor to defend themſelves againſt, even when it was evident enough that they had much rather not conſent; which often made that which would have looked like bounty loſe all its grace and luſtre."

George I. elector of Hanover, ſucceeded by virtue of the Act of Settlement in 1714. The whigs were impatient for his acceſſion, as the period in which they ſhould overſet their enemies, and without all doubt recover the whole authority of which they had been ſtripped by the tories. This prince being perſuaded that the heads of the miniſtry in the preceding reign had acted contrary to his intereſts in conducting the negociations of peace, and that they had been actuated by

other

other views ſtill more to his prejudice and favourable to the Pretender, (though this is generally ſuppoſed to have been an artifice of the whigs to get into power, and keep their enemies out of the adminiſtration; for had his majeſty been pleaſed to have encouraged all his ſubjects equally at his acceſſion, the Pretender's name had never been mentioned;) appointed a ſecret committee to inquire ſtrictly into the conduct of the earl of Oxford and lord viſcount Bolingbroke. Mr. Walpole was nominated as chief to examine into both their papers, eſpecially thoſe of the ſecretary's office, lord Bolingbroke's department. He had not forgot that his avowed oppoſition to the peace, and his intrigues to excite the commons againſt it, had been the cauſe of his impriſonment in the Tower under the laſt adminiſtration: he found an opportunity of being revenged, while he gratified at the ſame time his new maſter, and acquired the confidence of a prince, who though politic enough, was indolent, and ſeemed always to remain a perfect ſtranger to the affairs of his kingdom. Walpole took advantage of this favourable conjuncture, to inſert in his report whatever his paſſion and vindictive ſpirit could ſuggeſt; and he inſinuated himſelf further into king George's good graces in ſuch a manner, that

that he not only preſerved that prince's favour during his whole reign, but what may be reckoned a very extraordinary inſtance in any country, and perhaps the only one in England, he enjoyed the ſame credit and authority under his ſon, though theſe princes had been always of contrary ſentiments, the ſon having an averſion to thoſe who were in credit with his father.

We are now to conſider Mr. Walpole, afterwards Sir Robert, and earl of Orford, as Favourite Prime Miniſter, Lord-Paramount of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and Plenipotentiary in regard to the diſpoſal of all offices and poſts of ſtate. No miniſter ever before exceeded him in the arts of bribery and corruption. By ſuch infamous meaſures and ſo deſtructive of good government, he conſtantly managed the parliaments under his direction. Each man had his price, or his foible ſeemed to be ſo accurately ſtudied by him, that there was always ſome alluring bait thrown out to catch or gratify it. Buying and ſelling of boroughs; iniquitous jobs and contracts were quite the taſte of his adminiſtration: his views by theſe methods was to make the king abſolute, and preſerve the power in his own hands. There is no difference to the people of England, whether the prince ſets himſelf above

the laws; or whether he is made to reign arbitrarily by a corrupt parliament. There was now no acting as under the houſes of Tudor and Stuart; but corruption might effect it with a parliament ſo at devotion; and this is the reaſon that it is now ſaid that England will not be undone but by a parliament thus ſwayed and influenced by corruption. Sir Robert was ready to give the finiſhing ſtroke to his wicked deſigns, by introducing his ſcheme for a general exciſe, when the clamours and invectives of the whole nation, ripe for a revolt and vengeance againſt him in particular, deterred him, and fruſtrated the attempt, when the bill had even paſſed both houſes.

Every individual of the community has a right to declare in the moſt open and public manner their diſlike and abhorrence of ſuch a ſcheme, as being fraught with all thoſe evils which were ever attributed to it, and as moſt apparently ſtriking at the very fundamentals of our conſtitution. The collecting of any duties by the laws of exciſe, has, in all ages, been looked on as the moſt grievous and moſt oppreſſive method of collecting taxes; and, in all countries, exciſes of every kind are looked on as badges of ſlavery, and tho' the Engliſh nation is now unfortunately

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ſubjected to ſome of them, yet it is hoped they will never more conſent to any new exciſes, or to any new extenſion of the laws of exciſe, let the pretences for ſo doing be ever ſo ſpecious.

The power and influence of the crown would, no doubt, be greatly increaſed and improved by Sir Robert's ſcheme; great numbers of the people of this nation would thereby be rendered moſt ſubmiſſive and obedient to thoſe that ſhould hereafter be employed by the crown; but this ſhould be ſo far from being a motive to their conſent, that it is the ſtrongeſt motive to the negative, becauſe abſolutely inconſiſtent with our conſtitution. 'Tis true, an eaſe to the landed intereſt was upon this, as well as upon other ſchemes of Sir Robert, thrown out by him, as a bait for ſome gentlemen; but the landed gentlemen were not to be caught by ſuch baits; the hook appeared ſo plain, that it might be diſcovered by any man of common ſenſe. However, the deſign was wicked, for it was an endeavour to ſet the landed intereſt, in a manner, at war with the trading intereſt of the nation; it was endeavouring to deſtroy that harmony, which always ought to ſubſiſt among the people of the ſame nation, and which, if once deſtroyed, would

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certainly end in the ruin and deſtruction of the whole. Every landed gentlemen in England will do well to conſider what value their lands would be of, if for the ſake of a ſmall and immediate eaſe to themſelves, they ſhould be induced to oppreſs and deſtroy the trade of their country; and whoever conſiders this, will deſpiſe all ſuch projects, and reject them with that contempt which they deſerve. But there is another ſtrong reaſon againſt it. The houſe of commons is moſtly compoſed of gentlemen of the beſt families and greateſt properties perhaps in the nation; they have generally a great family-intereſt in the ſeveral counties, cities and boroughs they repreſent; if ſuch a ſcheme as Sir Robert's ſhould then take effect, that intereſt would ſoon be deſtroyed; and ſurely no man will ever agree to a ſcheme which muſt inevitably deſtroy the natural intereſt the great families have and always ought to have, in their reſpective counties, and transfer the whole to the crown. And indeed, if ſuch a ſcheme ſhould once be eſtabliſhed, the power and influence of the crown would be ſo great in all parts of the nation, that no man could depend upon the natural intereſt he has in this country, for being a member of the houſe; but muſt in all times for ſuch a favour, depend intirely

intirely upon the crown, which it muſt be ſuppoſed, few would chuſe to ſubmit to.

The Pelhams ſucceeded Sir Robert in quality of Prime Miniſters, but not Favourites. It was never found by their conduct that they endeavoured to make the paths of government ſtrait which their predeceſſor had diſtorted into ſuch unſeemly ways and means, and ſo much to the diſcredit of his memory. The ſame maxims, the ſame meaſures, the ſame ſchemes were purſued, but in a more occult and timid manner. Patriots roſe up from time to time to ſhake the reins of government out of their hands, as was done before to Sir Robert; but they proved falſe and pretended ones, deceitful and ſelf-intereſted. Like the *ignis fatuus*, their deluſive light drew after them a throng of popular voices and wiſhes; but theſe to their great aſtoniſhment were ſilenced and aſhamed, when the flaſh of the patriotic ſpirit evaporated, and the patriots themſelves, like the fabled Cerberus, were lulled into ſweet compoſure after all their obſtreperous din, by ſwallowing down the delicious morſel of a place, penſion or title. So that the Engliſh nation have little room to gape after the vanity of patriotiſm; they ſhould try the ſpirits, according to the advice of St. Paul, and be perſuaded, that the caſe of

of patriotiſm is ſimilar to that of the ſalvation expected by all good chriſtians, none being truly and eſſentially entitled to it, without perſevering ſteady and upright to the end.

Soon after the acceſſion of George III. John Earl of B.te made his entrance upon the ſtage of government, but was far from acting his part like an able politician. To make uſe of the words of a famous Parallel between him and Mr. P—, 'he raiſed himſelf to power by the favour of his prince,' and as ſome ſay of the —— of ——. Thus ſupported, he became ſecretary of ſtate, then firſt lord of the treaſury, and prime miniſter; making it his ſtudy to provide, firſt, for himſelf; ſecondly, for his friends the Scotch; thirdly, for the nation; with an Engliſh peerage for his lady. Amidſt the greateſt pretenſions to œconomy, he diſſipated the nation's wealth to procure friends, by multiplying needleſs places and penſions, raiſing new regiments when the old ones were not half compleat, and granting new commiſſions to regiments ready to be diſbanded. He appeared very partial in promoting his countrymen to places of profit: this rendered him odious to the Engliſh. He concluded a peace ſcarce adequate to the nation's ſucceſſes in the late war, and added to the peace

a moſt injudicious unpopular tax, to pay a loan managed with great partiality. Hereby he involuntarily put an end to his own power when it ſeemed moſt flouriſhing. Profeſſing to aboliſh parties by impartially employing all ſorts, he has in fact, by his partiality, raiſed a new and dangerous diviſion, the North of Britain againſt the South. By ſeeking the favour of the K~~ing~~, he endeavoured to maintain his power in ſpite of the people; and encroached on their liberties by an extenſion of the exciſe-laws. He did not know the genius of the people he would manage. Had he leſs ambition and vanity of openly governing, he would have had more real influence, and preſerved his power longer. He is indiſputably very proud; but the favour and affection of a great K~~ing~~ is enough to make any man ſo."

From this ſummary account of the reigns from the Conqueſt down to the preſent time, the Reader may have good reaſon to think, that Prime Miniſters and Favourites have been always odious to the Engliſh nation. Not only ſelf-love, envy, ambition, diſguſt, and revenge do naturally create an averſion to any one ſubject, who ſeems to engroſs and appropriate to himſelf the common father of the people; but the laudable affections, that

prompt to impartiality, tenderneſs to our prince, and love to our country, all conſpire to make every indifferent perſon an enemy to the One Powerful Fellow-Member, that commands over the head, and uſurps over the whole body. There never was yet, according to the obſervation of as wiſe a politician as ever England bred, a Prime Miniſter in Britain, but either broke his own neck, or his maſter's, or both, unleſs he ſaved his own by ſacrificing his maſter's.

It would ſcarce have been ſafe, at leaſt, it would not have been prudent in times when arbitrary notions prevailed, thus to entertain the Public with the diſmal conſequences that have attended upon veſting all Power in One Man; but at a time like this, we are cheared with more flattering aſpects, eſpecially, when it is the joy and conſolation of all good men, to ſee a Prince and a Briton upon the throne, who a lover of liberty by principle, and out of his innate goodneſs, and paternal affection for his people, is ready to remove their fears, by removing every man that aſpires to the guidance of the ſtate-helm in quality of Prime Miniſter. The confidence of the beſt of princes may be abuſed for a time by artful and deſigning courtiers; but when the voice of his people reaches his ears, he will

ſurely do them juſtice; and this we have reaſon to hope from our gracious ſovereign GEORGE III. who will employ under his ſacred auſpices, ſeveral equally able, equally virtuous and diſintereſted great men, jointly to draw on the well-balanced machine of government.

FINIS.